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RED BOOK

MAGAZINE



"THE ROSE COLORED SCARF"
A Story of Love Redeemed

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THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

CONTENTS FOR AUGUST, 1911

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| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----|
| COVER DESIGN | Painted by Jan Attol | |
| To accompany "The Rose Colored Scarf"—page 635 | | |
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| FRONTISPIECE | Drawn by Edmund Frederick | |
| To accompany "The Rose Colored Scarf"—page 635 | | |
| TEN YEARS AFTER | James Hopper | 609 |
| A STORY OF FOOTBALL AND OF LIFE | Illustrated by Monte Creus | |
| YOUR COURTING DAYS | Seumas Mac Manus | 627 |
| A GLIMPSE OF DONEGAL LIFE | Illustrated by C. F. Peters | |
| THE ROSE COLORED SCARF | Eleanor M. Ingram | 635 |
| AN AUTO LOVE AFFAIR | Illustrated by Edmund Frederick | |
| THE ORCHIDS | Edwin Balmer | 647 |
| WHEN THE SHERIFF STOOD OFF THE MOB | Illustrated by Hermann C. Wall | |
| IN THE LABORATORY | H. B. Marriott Watson | 658 |
| THE WORLD SPINS BACKWARD | Illustrated by R. W. Amick | |
| THE SNUFFLE-SNEEZE | Ellis Parker Butler | 669 |
| SHE WAS THE FANNINGS' HIRED GIRL | | |
| THE MAN THAT LOST HIS CHANCE | Reginald W. Kauffman | 673 |
| AND HOW HE FOUND ANOTHER | Illustrated by Charles L. Wrenn | |
| THE FRUIT SHOWER IN ROOM THREE | Florine Leming | 685 |
| A DRAMA SPRANG FROM IT | | |
| THE COUNT GUY | John A. Moroso | 689 |
| SOLID IVORY WINS AGAIN | Illustrated by Robert Edwards | |
| A BUSH LEAGUE HERO | Edna Ferber | 699 |
| RUDIE SCHLACHWEILER'S CONQUEST | Illustrated by Irma Deremeaux | |
| THE HEAVENLY GOATS | Mary Imlay Taylor | 707 |
| WHEN PROVIDENCE INTERVENED | Illustrated by B. Cory Klivert | |
| EUTERPIA SHOTT—DEMONSTRATOR | Walter Jones | 714 |
| WHAT SHE DID TO "PINCUS BROS." | Illustrated by Robert F. Norris | |
| THE BLACK FINGERS | Eleanor Gates | 724 |
| A FRONTIER DETECTIVE STORY | Illustrated by Frank X. Chamberlin | |
| THE REAL MR. MUSSEN | William Johnston | 742 |
| HE OWNED ATLANTIC CITY—FOR A WHILE | Illustrated by Horace Taylor | |
| THE THEATRES IN MIDSUMMER | Louis V. De Foe | 753 |
| TO-DAY AND DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY | Illustrated from photographs | |

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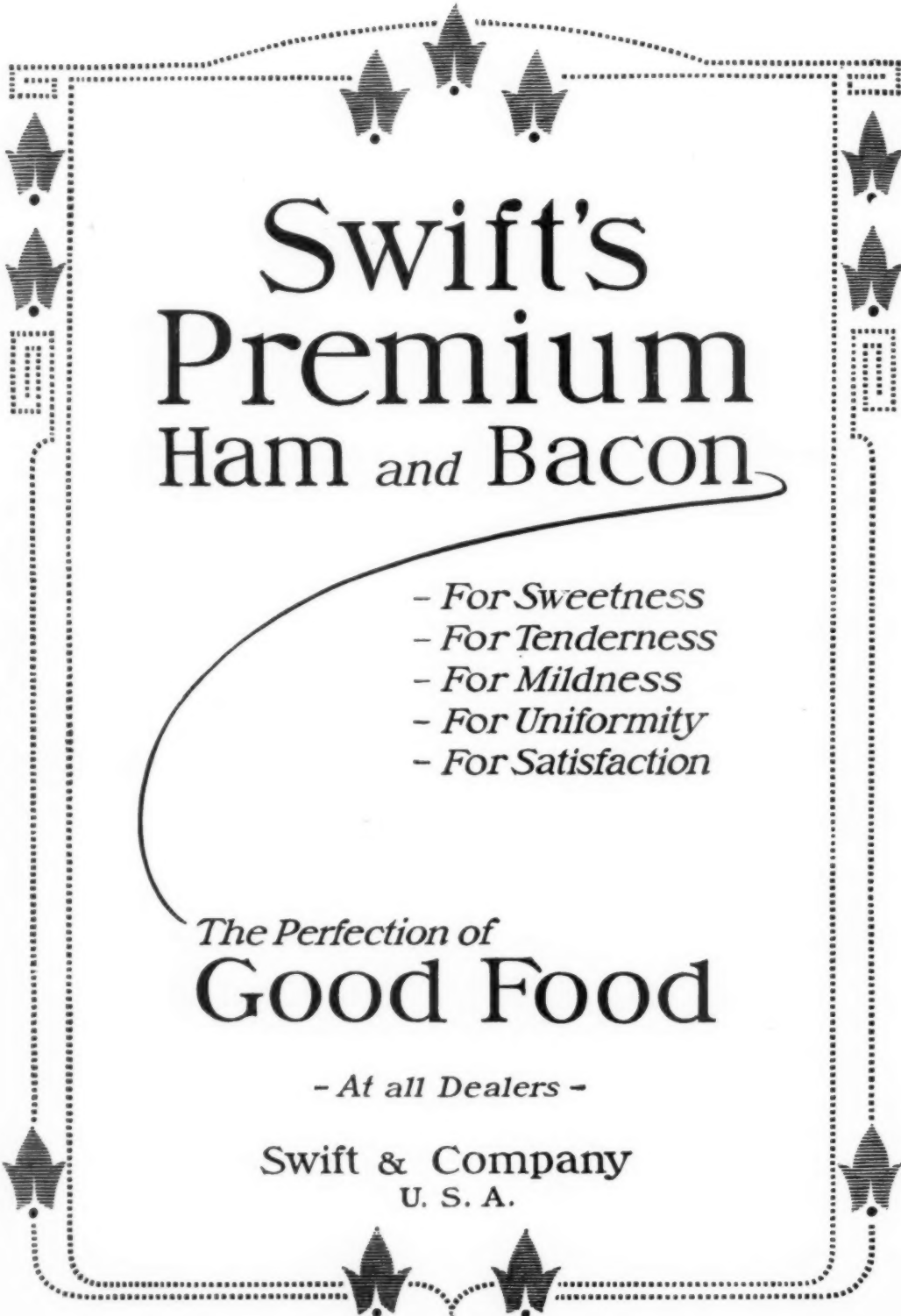
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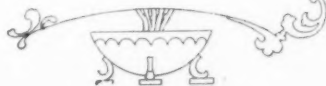


MISS NANCE O'NEILL
in her character costume in "The Lily"





MISS NANCE O'NEILL
playing in "The Lily"





MISS ANNIE RUSSELL
in "The Backsliders"



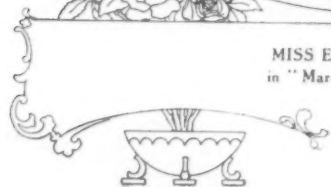


MISS GRACE GEORGE
in "Sauce For The Goose"





MISS EMMY WHELEN
in "Marriage a la Carte"





MISS MARGARET ANGLIN
in "Green Stockings"



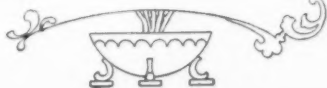


MISS MILLICENT EVANS
in "U. S. Minister Bedloe"



PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO, CHICAGO.

MISS MARGARET DALE
in "Disraeli."





MISS JULIA SANDERSON
in "The Arcadians"





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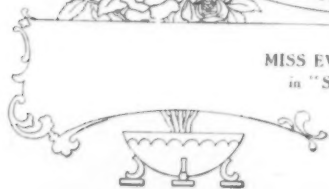
Another pose of
JULIA SANDERSON





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MISS EVA MacDONALD
in "Seven Sisters"





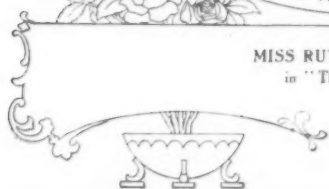
MISS EVELYN CONWAY
in "The Girl and the Kaiser"





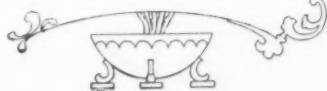
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MISS RUTH CHATTERTON
in "The Great Name"





MISS ZOE BARNETTE
in "Marriage a la Carte"





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MISS MURIEL STARR
in "The Stranger"



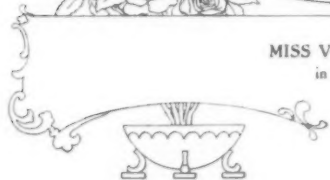


MISS ESTHER HALL
in "Sweet Sixteen"



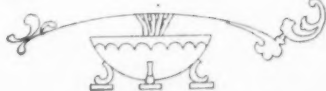


MISS VIOLET DE VOURNE
in "Merry Mary"





MISS EVA FRANCIS
in "The Yankee Girl"





MISS MYRTLE TANNEHILL
in "Get Rich Quick Wallingford"



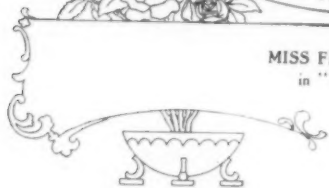


MISS JEAN MURDOCK





MISS FRANCES GORDON
in "Sweet Sixteen"



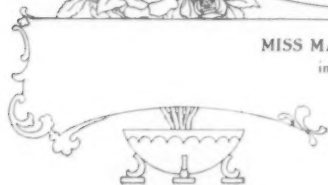


MISS ALTA PHIPPS
in "The Star & Garter"



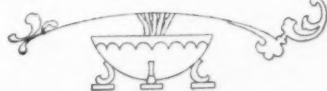


MISS MABEL FRENEYAR
in Vaudeville



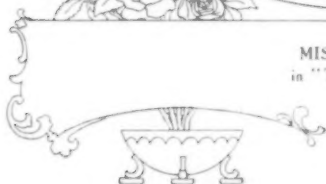


MISS LEILA SHAW
playing in stock





MISS EDITH LYLE
in "The Country Boy"





MISS CAROLYN GORDON
in "Get Rich Quick Wallingford"





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MISS ADA GLEASON
playing in stock



MISS LUCILLE BLOOM
in "The Heart Breakers"





The floating scarf caught on the latch: she did not heed the tangle

To accompany "The Rose Colored Scarf,"—page 635

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Vol. XVII August, 1911. No 4.

TEN YEARS AFTER A STORY OF FOOTBALL AND OF LIFE

By
JAMES HOPPER
Author of "Caybigan", etc.

Illustrated by Monte Crews

WHEN "Jim" Norton, in his junior year, came out upon the field for his third football season, right away he found himself possessed of that easy and elegant efficiency called "class." It had come to him, apparently, with suddenness and overnight; it was, as a matter of fact, the abrupt and visible result of years of slow and secret preparation. His mind, now, worked out the instantaneous problems of attack as instantaneously as they presented themselves; an unerring instinct told him immediately and accurately where to go and what to do; he was lightning fast; his shoulder, in tackling, struck with a precise impact that jumped the runner upward like the explosion of a bomb. As though it were a matter of course and a matter of right, Sommer, captain of the team, drew him away from the scrubs and placed him at

right end on the 'Varsity. This was an outward and material sign of the change which had come, but Norton was alive still more to its inward manifestations—to the refinement of his sensibilities of the Game; to the increased suppleness of his strong muscles; and to the new, glad, fierce pride that ran hot in his veins. Thus, his performance in the first big match of the year did not surprise him at all. It did surprise every one else, including the college paper which on the following Monday gave almost a column to his "transformation." Norton knew that this "transformation" was but the inevitable reward of two years of patient toil. He had "made good," they said. He had made himself good, he knew.

This game had been rather a hard one. It was against the team of an athletic club made up of veterans and renowned

players. The College eleven showed as yet little promise, and the season was young. After scoring a touch-down on its big opponents in the first half, it was in such poor condition that it was pulled out bodily by its captain, and replaced by a second eleven. Bodily, except for Norton; he seemed good for a little more, and was kept at right end. It was especially during this second half that Norton astonished everybody. The whole right wing of the line was weak, and Norton proved its mainstay. He smashed up the attacks at his end, capsized others aimed farther in, and "smeared" still others clear in the center. He seemed everywhere at once with those tremendous tackles which the College paper later qualified as "superb." It was he who saved the team in its desperate defensive fight. When he was through, he was a strange looking object. The fury of the fight was still in him, making him feel good. But when the Physical Director looked at him through the window of the cab which was starting for the hotel where they dressed, he gave a little gasp.

"Here, Norton," he said, "better let me fix you up a bit."

"Oh, I'm all right," answered Norton, who, as has been explained, was still feeling quite good.

"But you don't know how you look!" returned the Director, again with a little soundless gasp. Then it was the Coach, Stuyvesant, who looked in.

He had arrived from his home in the East that very day, just in time to see his charges in the game. It was his second year with them. He stood there at the door of the cab in the position now familiar to Norton—his feet apart, his weight a bit forward on his toes, his slender body loose with an indefinable and elegant recklessness. He looked in with those strange black eyes of his, at once roving and fixed, shifty and fearless.

"That's right, Norton, keep it up," he said, but there was no emphasis to the words.

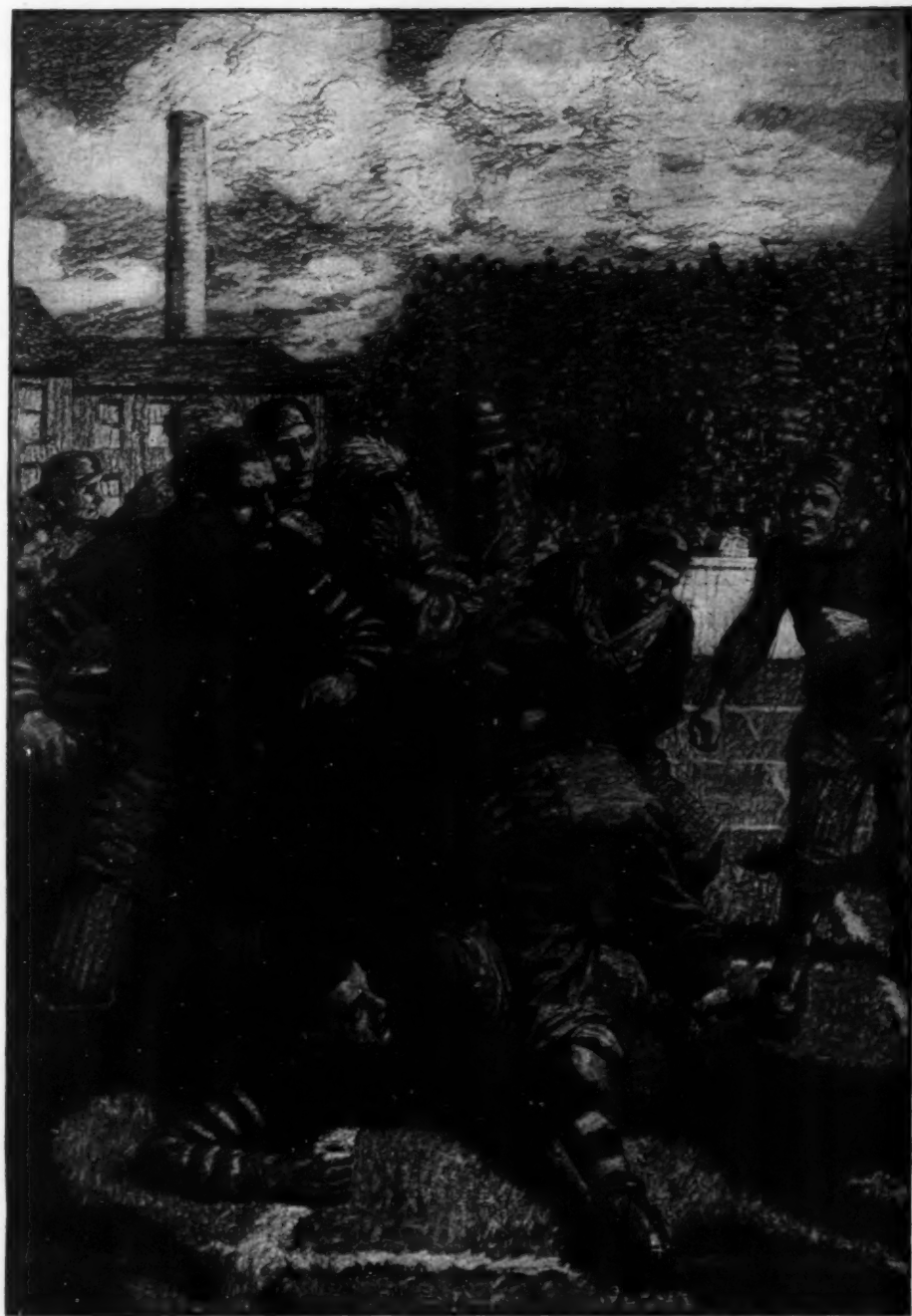
Norton experienced a slight disappointment which, of course, he did not voice, and upon which he did not even allow his mind to dwell.

The ways of a Coach are omnipotent; and this Coach was a god of the Game, haloed with an all-American teamship and gilded with legend. If the performance of Norton drew from him words without emphasis, words without emphasis meted out the exact value of the performance. Norton had accepted without question, and absolutely, the tacit rules of football discipline.

So that again he said nothing and tried to think nothing when, on the following Monday, Stuyvesant, taking hold of affairs in his characteristic whirlwind fashion, failed to call him to the position at right end which he had illustrated the Saturday before, and kept him on the sidelines. Rather, he took a little innocent vanity out of the fact. On Sunday, all the metropolitan papers had hailed him as a star; this very morning he had read in the *Daily Collegiate* the vivid account of his prowess; he had noted that it seemed already established that he would make the Team and represent his College in the final big game against Harcourt. He took it that he had been graduated into the ranks of those valuable men who are treasured and nursed, and that the Coach wisely was giving him a rest from the battering of Saturday's battle.

From the side-lines, philosophically, he watched McPherson bungle in his place.

Between Norton and this McPherson, there was a slight, subtle and silent feud. McPherson was of a species differing from Norton's. He had not gone to High School; he came from a private academy where each boy had a suite of rooms with bath, kept a horse, and wore a military uniform. He was not, as Norton, a "barb;" from the first he had been "rushed" by that fraternity in College most successful in establishing a special distinction through the dashing cut of its clothes and vague rumors of uncertain dissipations. His family home, over in the City, was on the hill called Nob; his mother "entertained" much; and he had a sister whose picture appeared often in the society pages of the *Post*, *Times*, and *Tribune*, and whom the reporters called a "belle." He had come out for the Fresh-



On a slippery, grassy surface Stuyvesant pounded his weary team
against the scrub for hour after hour

man team in his first year, and Norton had beaten him "to it" by beating him "to a frazzle." Last year, he had not been seen upon the field; now he was out again, and at his first appearance Stuyvesant was placing him on the 'Varsity. No doubt Stuyvesant had a reason. The reasons of a Coach are sometimes inscrutable, but they always *are*, and they must not be discussed. McPherson was big and rather fast; perhaps Stuyvesant thought that he could make a good man out of him. He could not know yet, as Norton did, that McPherson had no decision in action and never would have any. Norton, nursing his knowledge, smiled gently to himself as from the side-line he observed his rival missing tackle after tackle.

The next day, however, philosophy, though achieved, was achieved with more effort. Norton was not left on the side-lines this day; he was placed on the scrub, the scrub upon which for two years he had worked hard, and from which he had thought himself a graduate. The thing came as a jolt. Norton, casting about for the reason of the Coach, found one which was convincing. "I thought I had the place on the team right in my hand," he said to himself, "and he's going to show me that I haven't, that no one has, and that I must work for it. He thinks I have the *big head*. Guess I had. But I haven't any more." Some rebellious particle inside of him clamored that he had never at all had the *big head*. He crushed said rebellious particle and buckled down to work.

He worked hard on the scrub that day, and the next. His diagnosis must have been correct, for on Thursday Stuyvesant placed him back on the 'Varsity. On Friday, he was on the 'Varsity for half of the practice, and McPherson for the other half. But on Saturday, for the second match of the season against an outside team, it was McPherson who was at right end.

Squatting on the side-line, Norton said to himself that everything was as it should be, and right. Stuyvesant wanted to give McPherson a thorough try-out.

"He wants to try him out," he told himself. "He'll keep him in for the first

half, and put me in for the second. I'll go in for the second half, and by Gee, I'll show them the difference!"

But he did not show anyone the difference. He did not show anyone the difference, because he did not go in for the second half. He remained on the side-line the whole time, and saw McPherson, on the same field where he, Norton, a week before, had electrified the world, play a miserable, uncertain game—but play it right through to the last whistle without being called out.

The reason was becoming harder to find; but of course there *was* a reason. Since it was so hard to find, Norton's duty, he decided, was not to think about it; to keep his mouth shut, his mind passive, and to *work*.

He worked the whole next week on the scrub. The idea that he might be one of those valuable men who are treasured and nursed and rested was quite dissipated now. He could not have complained of not being used enough. He was at it all of the time. While others were put in for a quarter or a half of the practice and then sent up to the dressing-rooms for their grooming, he stayed from beginning to end. And on Saturday, for the season's third match with an outside team, he found himself again on the side-line. He was fairly shivering with desire to get in. He knew that it was in such a match especially that he had a chance to show what he really was. In a match, at a crisis, all his powers were multiplied. His intuitions, then, were acute as pain; he was lightning quick, and all his movements were inexorably true. But he did not get in. McPherson was there in his place. He had improved somewhat, but his performance on the whole was mediocre.

This slight improvement within mediocrity seemed to satisfy Stuyvesant. He wrote every week for the *Post* an account of the week's practice and of the game ending the week—an amusing account, trenchantly penned, in which he did not hide at all the satirical disdain which he, all-American star, glory of America's most footballesque University, felt for the provincial Westerners whom he was coaching. This Monday, the account rang

with praises of McPherson's improvement—praises aggressively couched, as if bludgeoning in advance possible contradictions. It was read widely at the training-quarters, and digested (or undigested) in profound silence.

If Stuyvesant was writing in the papers, he was also being written about in the papers. Whereas, in his first year of coaching, he had lived in the college town, close to his work, now he was living in the City, in its best hotel, and giving much time to society. His contempt for the West was having its reward in the delirious appreciation of the West. He was much "fêted and dined;" he was "the interesting lion of the social season." The McPherson "mansion" was especially convulsing itself for him. This appeared in the "society columns" of the big dailies. Other things appeared in the smaller weeklies. One of them printed a paragraph in which with irony and grace it hinted at a romance between the dashing Coach (scion of one of the East's oldest families) and Miss May McPherson, belle of western nobility. Norton, like everyone else, read the paragraph—and dismissed it severely from his mind. The weeklies were nothing but evil-tongued, calumniating, contemptible little sheets!

So, true to his ideal of duty and discipline, he toiled on, mouth shut and mind passive—toiled on the scrub where he seemed now a fixture. This is grueling, especially when you are kept at it from beginning to end of practice; especially if, on the scrub, you are better than the scrub. The scrub's best man is like the granite slab in the wall of rotten stone crumbling before a ram. He gets more than his share of attention from the ram. Norton found that, since the beginning of the season, he had lost five pounds. As his danger, always, was of going too "fine," he was worried thereat—which did not better his weight. Also, he knew that McPherson was heavier than he by ten pounds. Among the secret reasons of a great Coach might be the determination to have a certain number of human pounds in the line.

That certain number of human pounds was tried on the Saturday, for the fourth

match of the season with an outside team, and Norton watched it from the side-line. It seemed now years ago that he had played on the same field; he could not realize that he, Jim Norton, now on the side-line and a scrub, only a few weeks before had been here the sizzling meteor. And yet an assurance, strong and quiet within, told him that, were he again given the chance, he would again make good; that nothing, then, could stand before the ardor of his attacks, the strength, the spring, the joy of his attacks. A chance! He wanted only a chance!

The human pounds at the right extremity of the line worked very indifferently, but Norton failed to get his usual secret amusement out of this. He was fast losing capacity for amusement. Also, every morning, when he got up after a long sleep, he found himself just as tired as when he had gone to bed.

On Monday he was again on the scrub, working with mouth shut. Still, as before, whenever a rebellious part of his brain insisted upon asking a question, demanded why he did not get his chance in a game, that other part of his brain which was discipline and the notion of what things should be (and are not), answered very curtly that the Coach must have a good reason. He began to feel, though, about him a vague turmoil. Men would stop him on the walks, in the halls, would chat a bit about the team, and then abruptly would depart, lips tight on something harsh.

On Wednesday, the College daily suddenly burst forth with a thunderous editorial which said that to be successful the men of the College must stand together behind its Coach. "If you are sore because *your* friend is not on the team, keep quiet about it. This is going to be no team of friends, but a team of victors!" The exhortation went on with that degree of violence necessary for one's own persuasion.

Norton, like everyone else, read the editorial; he did not try to understand it; he was like an army officer reading of politics. A College is a republic; its football team is its army, and is not supposed to have thoughts about itself.

Norton wondered what all this row was about, and who the fellows could be who were not "standing by the Coach."

Another phenomenon began to take shape. Every afternoon, now, a tight group of rooters massed on the bleachers and in unison yelled "Jimmy Norton! Jimmy Norton!" This did not please Norton. He knew the Coach as a very masterful person, and hence probably very stubborn and contradictory; he feared that this Jimmy Norton business was hurting his chances. True to his ideal of conduct, however, he pretended to notice this no more than he noticed anything else, and toiled on with mouth shut.

Stuyvesant, anyhow, was trying to be just. He now began to place Norton on the Varsity every other day, in alternation with McPherson; he seemed thus to be carefully comparing the ability of the two men. Norton had to avow to himself that these respective abilities were by now not beyond comparison. McPherson had improved; he was being well coached; moreover, he was in fine condition, vigorous, sleek and fat.

Norton, on the other hand, had lost ten pounds since the beginning of the season; when he ran down the field on punts, he noticed that his legs did not have their usual spring; they were a bit wooden, and the length of his stride was little more than their span. Something else worried him more. This was Stuyvesant's way of shouting after him all of the time. Stuyvesant's method, it must be said, was to stand back and crack the whip and work everyone at top speed. But he did seem to give most of his shouts to Norton. "Norton, Norton, why aren't you under there, why aren't you under there?" became his ceaseless and loud complaint. Now, as a matter of truth, sometimes Norton could not be under the pile-up because it had occurred on the side of the field opposite his, and, reaching it, he had found it already formed and not to be tunneled; but at other times, even as Stuyvesant, loud and scandalized, cried, "Norton, why aren't you under there?" said Norton was in fact "under there," and heard the wail of his Coach only through a superincum-

bence of arms, legs, and beefy bodies.

In secret and in silence, Norton deplored this lack of vision in his Coach. The reiterated question as to his whereabouts was sure to hurt him with the bleachers, just as much as the "Jimmy Nortons" of the bleachers were sure to hurt him with his Coach. The proper conduct, of course, was to notice neither, to toil and to let the rest take care of itself. So he worked on, grimly and speechless, as was his duty.

He worked hard, but not very well. He was still losing weight. He got up every morning very tired and hot, and his legs were becoming more and more wooden. He played his position efficiently, much more efficiently than did McPherson, but he was not, as he had been during the first days of the season, all over the field at once.

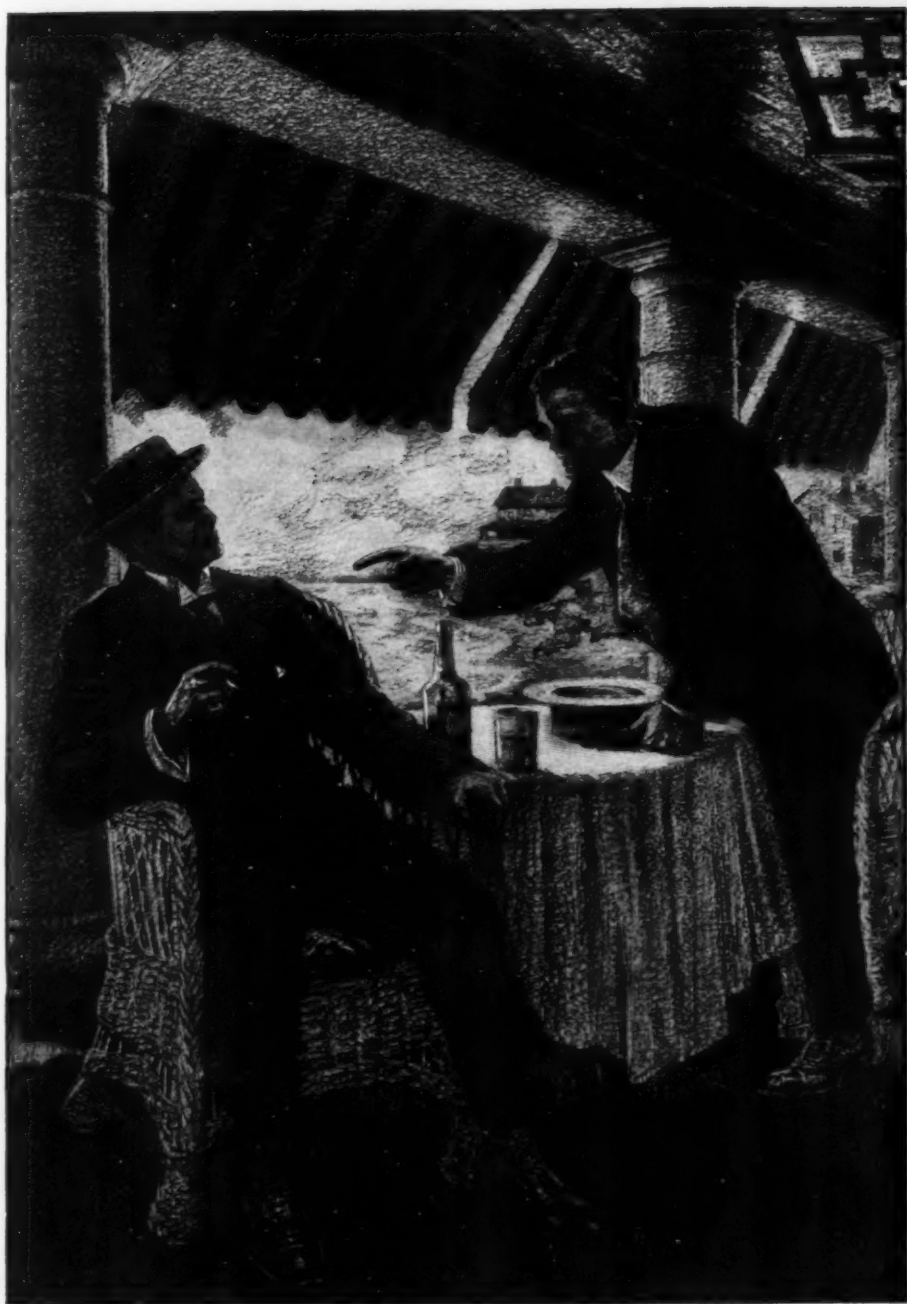
One reason for this was the condition of the grounds. The practice grounds were soft, plowed loam, and Norton's brilliancy depended largely on his quickness on his feet. The gridiron, over in the city, where the matches were played, was of smooth, elastic turf; if only he were given a chance there, he would show everybody. There was also a moral cause. Norton had reserve powers for a crisis, but it took that crisis to bring them into action. In a big match, all his powers were trebled. If only he could play in a game, he would show them!

But the fifth game came, and he did not play in it.

Around him, vaguely, he felt a disquiet. Men still broke away from him in the midst of a chat as if to keep from saying something all ready there, at the end of their tongues; others even got into the habit of tapping him on the shoulder, when passing him, and saying "stick to it." He pretended not to understand, and really tried not to understand. His chum, with whom he roomed out of football season, when not in training quarters, stopped him in a corridor one morning.

"You're not playing your game," he said with the frankness of friendship. "You must do more than that to show McPherson up."

Norton thought of the soft, paralyzing



"You took advantage of my youth, my inexperience, my innocence. These things are gone now. Stuyvesant, you are a thief!"

loam of the field, of the nervous exaltation of big matches.

"Just let them put me in for a game, and I'll show him up all right!" he rejoined.

The chum growled like a bear. "They'll be mighty careful not to put you into a game," he said.

Norton forced the insinuation out of his mind.

The next day, his chum seemed excited. "Sommer is kicking," he whispered, pinching Norton's arm as he passed him hurriedly.

Sommer was the Captain of the team; Norton's chum was on the athletic committee.

Norton again refused to understand. A singular incident, though, took place on the field that afternoon. Stuyvesant put Norton on the 'Varsity. But he placed him at left end, leaving McPherson at right. At left end had been Carson, who had held the position efficiently for three years. Carson was a Beta Kappa. So was Sommer, Captain of the team.

This continued for three days. For three days Norton and McPherson were the ends of the 'Varsity, while Carson played on the scrub. Then Norton was dropped back, and Carson regained his place.

When next Norton met his chum, the chum was no longer elated. "Justice ends where fraternity begins," he said cryptically; so cryptically that it was with little effort that Norton did not understand.

His mind, anyway, was being dulled by the body's dullness. It was in bad shape, the body. Each morning, as it rolled out of bed, it creaked and hurt. The legs were as of wood. One shoulder was strained, and the left knee gave a feeling of insecurity, as though the cords on the inside were loose. Morally, a real discouragement now possessed Norton. He worked this week so listlessly that a fair man could have seen little difference between his playing and that of McPherson.

The next week was to be the last. At the end of it, a menace and an exaltation, was the Big Game with Harcourt. On the Sunday, Norton pulled himself to-

gether. It took him long, silent hours to do so. But when he went to bed, he was resolved to smash things up the next day, and the entire week.

It proved a blue week. Alternate rains and frosts had made of the gridiron a quagmire, and the practicing was done on the higher ground of the campus. There, upon a slipping, grassy surface, Stuyvesant pounded his weary team up hill against the scrub for hour after hour. A fury possessed him, a madness of destruction.

Right from the first day, a host of rooters lined up on the walk along the temporary field, and began yelling "Jimmy Norton, Jimmy Norton," and would not quit, and yelled it the whole week. And Stuyvesant, during the length of each practice, alternately drew Norton from the scrub to the 'Varsity, from the 'Varsity to the scrub, while McPherson was oscillated *vice versa*.

Bolstered up by his tremendous resolution of Sunday, Norton worked gloriously. It is true that his performance was not as that of the beginning days of the season. It was not a natural, irrepressible ardor that hurled him into masses; it was not an instantaneous and bounding instinct that told him where to go and what to do. It was his will, now, upon which everything depended; his will, ceaselessly screwed up to its maximum, and the least release of which dumped him back into heavy listlessness. He toiled with mind concentrated all of the time, and with a fear at his heart that at any moment this concentration would snap. He was not all over the field at once, as of yore; his wooden legs did not permit of this; but he played his position with unremitting diligence, with a squatting stubbornness, with a tight and ferocious fixity.

Every few minutes, he found himself on the 'Varsity, every few minutes, back to the scrub. He smashed up impartially 'Varsity attack and scrub attack. When he was on the 'Varsity, the entire crowd along the field went mad with "Jimmy Norton! Jimmy Norton!" When McPherson was on the 'Varsity, there was a dead silence. And that whole day, that entire week, Stuyvesant oscillated the

rivals, as if carefully weighing and trying them, and the College, watching, pulsed with excitement and suspense. But within Norton there was little suspense. He was making his last big effort in justice to himself, and held no illusions. He knew that all this Jimmy Norton shouting along the side-lines could do him little good.

It didn't. On the Thursday before the game, new sweaters were given out—brilliant, striped, orange and blue sweaters. Just eleven were given out. There are eleven men on a football team. Norton did not get one. But at lunch, that noon, at the training quarters, he sat opposite McPherson, and McPherson wore under his coat a new, brilliant, striped orange and blue sweater. McPherson was eating with zest, with appetite, and with satisfaction. Somehow, Norton was abruptly seized with an acrid detestation of this way of eating, and stopped his hand just as, by reflex, it was on the point of heaving a plate of hot soup at the placid, hungry face opposite.

The Big Game was played with Norton on the side-line. The overtrained team was beaten twenty points to nothing—two touch-downs, and hence twelve points, being made around McPherson while he stood still, petrified and tangle-footed. The sorrow over this great disaster overwhelmed whatever private grief Norton otherwise might have felt.

The team, returning in a bus to the hotel where it dressed, was in the condition of an hysterical seminary. McPherson, leaning over as if broken in two, held his hands against his face, and through the cracks between the fingers, a humidity soiled with mud was oozing. Norton put his arm about his shoulders. "You played a great game, McPherson," he declared, magnanimously.

McPherson choked. "I didn't," he wailed. "I—I—you—you—" But this was all that he could say.

Thinking it over during the next few days, Norton came to be satisfied. He had done his duty—thoroughly, formally, with mouth shut. He had taken his medicine and had not squealed. And in the whole long trouble, Stuyvesant had gotten out of him not one word.

II

Ten years later, of an afternoon, James Norton was swimming in the breakers of Rockaway Beach, near New York. He swam there often, during the season; it was his way of holding to the physical trimness established in his athletic youth. Once, or twice, or even three times a week, whenever, in fact, he could take a few hours from his work on the *New York National*, he stole out to the beach, by steam or electricity, and then pushed on half-a-mile further into liquid immensity with no other aid, this time, than his still very good arms and legs.

To-day, although there was no wind, some storm far out had disturbed the sea; it came rolling toward the land in billows large and smooth. These piled up in the shallows, reared high, and then, top-heavy, broke in white, thundering foam. Norton sported in the welter; he dived through the sharp crests as they paused before their breathless descents, took a breath in the lustrous concavities between, dived again; and at times, in the heaving green translucence of some giant, his body appeared, horizontal and supple, thrown, as on a screen, up against the sky. It was an exciting spectacle, and three officious life-guards, in officious bathing-suits, who had tried to dissuade Norton from going out, watched it in silent disgust.

When he was through, and was dressing in his cabin, it occurred to him suddenly, as he combed before the small glass, that his hair seemed thinner than it had been—say, ten years before. The observation may have been incorrect, but it served to start anew a train of thought which had been started several times of late—ever since the menace of war in the Orient, in fact—and which was beginning to cut a little groove.

The groove was this: "My hair is getting thin. By Jove, I must be getting old. Let's see. Ninety-blank; nineteen-blank. Have been at the job ten years. And what am I doing? The same old thing."

There was a heaviness at the pit of his stomach. He realized that he was not getting on; that for several years he had been at a stand-still. He was exaggerat-

ing. His position was not at all bad. He was probably the near-star man of his paper. The bigger stories went to him. But somehow he felt within him mountains and mountains of possibilities unused. What he *was* doing was nothing to what he *could* do. These possibilities, there within him, seemed unguessed of other men. Why? What was there wrong about his life-method that he should so be underestimated?

For instance, this war, now preparing between the big white bear and the vicious little brown bantam. He was tingling to be on the field at the first blow. Here was a crisis to which he could rise! And astonish people! But not one at the office spoke to him about going. No one seemed to think of him in that connection. Why?

Pondering vaguely on these things, he left the cabin and, going along the boardwalk, entered the veranda of a café facing the sea. He was making for the vicinity of a small table at which a man sat by a clinking glass, when his glance, falling upon the idler, abruptly rounded itself into a stare. He stiffened up, swerved, and, eyes to the front, swept by table and man, toward the extremity of the veranda.

He had recognized the person sitting there. He had recognized a dashing elegance, in ten years slightly thickened, and two strange eyes, at once shifty and fearless, above a handsome face but little puffed. The person was Stuyvesant, Norton's football coach ten years before, and whom he had never seen since. Somehow, he had no desire to sit with him, nor speak with him.

But Stuyvesant was in another mood. As Norton, ignoring and dignified, was moving away, he felt upon his shoulder a detaining hand, in his ear a voice.

"Norton!" said Stuyvesant.

Norton wheeled, looked at him, and said nothing. They stood face to face, and silent. Vaguely, though, Norton felt that the man before him was to him not what he had been ten years before. Something had fallen away from him, something which in some way recalled to Norton card-board scenery.

"Sit down with me," Stuyvesant said

at length. "There is something—something I should like to tell you."

Norton sat down at Stuyvesant's table, and said nothing. What Stuyvesant had to tell did not come easily. He hemmed and looked out at sea. Norton's surprise was growing; more acutely still he felt that something had fallen away from his old coach, something that was as card-board scenery. With the surprise, the faintest light of amusement was mingling. For he saw that Stuyvesant was embarrassed; saw that in this meeting, he, Norton, in the past always the inferior, the humble, the dominated, now held some secret and inexplicable advantage.

But Stuyvesant was speaking. His first words appeared devoid of significance. "'T was you? Swimming out there? In that stuff?" he asked, pointing to the breaking sea.

"'T was I," said Norton.

"By Jove!" murmured Stuyvesant with a sort of consternation. And then, "I *thought* it was."

There was another silence. From the depths of it Stuyvesant emerged slowly with another hesitant question.

"Ten years—ten years ago—when you played—you know—then, did you swim like that?"

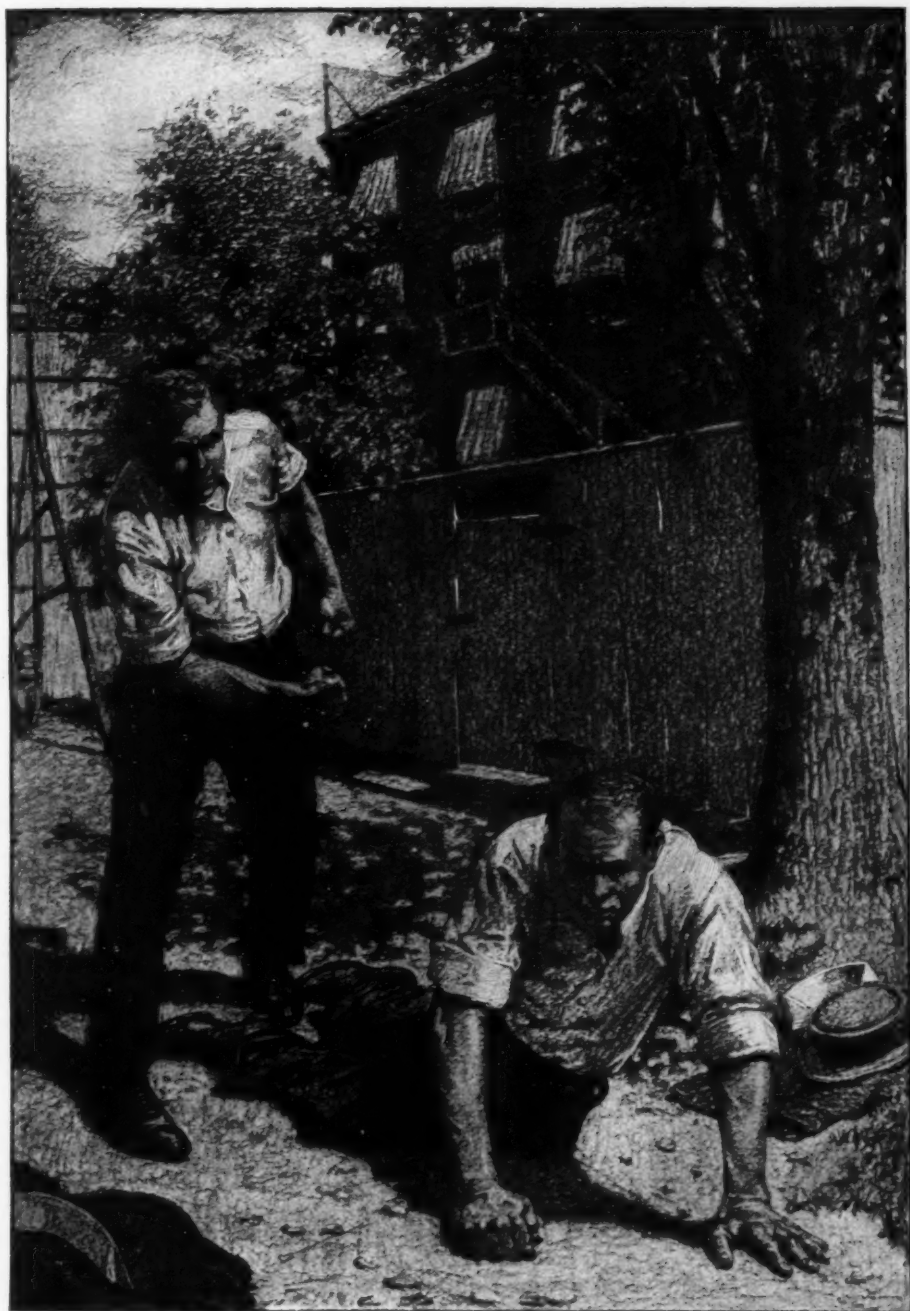
"Certainly. Since I was ten years old," said Norton. "I was raised in Hawaii."

"Then why in—why didn't you say so?" flashed Stuyvesant, his embarrassment fleeing to a flash of his old dominance.

But Norton had learned much since those days; he had learned, for instance, to answer aggressiveness by aggressiveness. Also, seeing his hair thin in the glass of the swimming cabin had put him in a dangerous humor.

"I didn't know I was supposed to *confess* to you then," he said heavily, "even if I *did* do about everything else. I don't remember, anyhow, that you encouraged confidences. Besides, was it a swimming school that you conducted? Oh say, drop that, will you?" he ended in a sudden overflow of disgust.

Stuyvesant eyed him swiftly, gave a little whistle, and was speechless once more. He was thinking; and as he



When he went to earth a third time he stayed there till
Norton had helped him up

thought, embarrassment regained possession of him.

When he spoke again, it was with a return of the tentative manner; his eyes, between words, roved over to Norton, as if to inspect their effect. "I suppose," he said, "I suppose—you think—that ten years ago, that time—you should have been—have been on the team?"

Norton leaned over and looked him square in the face.

"Ten years ago," he said slowly, "I was an idealist—a kid and a fool. I tried hard to persuade myself that there was some good reason why I should not be on the team; tried hard to think that, even if there were not, even if you were mistaken, the mistake was an honest one. Since that, year by year, I have become less and less of an idealist. I have worked out of my system that—malady. I have looked backward and have re-read; have sought to read aright. And two years ago I came to a final decision about you. Stuyvesant, ten years ago, you robbed me of my rightful place on the team. You robbed me, coolly, calculatingly, and with cunning. You robbed me for a price. A price that carried with it not even the excuse of sufficiency. You robbed me simply to bask in the fake light of the McPherson social standing. You took advantage of my youth, my inexperience, my (and I say it without shame) my innocence; of my fool, baby idealism, my sense of what was duty—all these invisible strings that stopped me from going to you face to face and calling you a thief. These things are gone now. Stuyvesant, you are a thief."

His voice had gone lower and lower, and each word, clear-cut and carved, was flung out of his mouth as out of the stamp of a die, and gradually his face had pushed across the little table closer and closer to Stuyvesant's. Stuyvesant, on his side, had paled more and more, and little beads of sweat stood out upon his brow. There was a long silence.

Then Stuyvesant rose with a sort of gasp. He stood still, looking out to sea. He drew his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his forehead. He sat down, and carefully relaxed his body in the wicker chair.

"Norton," he said, looking steadily at his own shoes, "no one has ever spoken to me like that, and no one ever will, either. However, I am taking it. Because it is medicine. It's true I wronged you—ten years ago. I've suspected it since. And I became sure of it a little while ago—when I saw you out there in the breakers. I suppose I robbed you all right. But my motive"—he choked a bit, coughed—"my motive was not quite what you have it. It's—well, it's still more absurd. Much more absurd. But also more honest. Fact is"—he made an attempt at a smile—"fact is, I can give you back some of that lost idealism."

"I don't understand you," said Norton uncompromisingly.

"It's dead simple; it's dead simple," said Stuyvesant. And then a third time he said, "It's dead simple."

"What?" asked Norton flatly.

"What happened. But not easy to explain, though. What you say about that McPherson social standing is partly true. I was young and—well, I *was* having a deuce of a good time. But what you don't know is that I had been spending the preceding summer at a beach resort with that whole darned McPherson family. And there I saw McPherson swim—" (He pointed out to sea; he gave a little breath.)—"in breakers like this. I'd—I'd never seen anything like it, you see—"

"McPherson could swim some," corrected the precise Norton, "but I could swim circles around him. Circles!"

Stuyvesant looked toward him upward, sideways, and with appeal. Sweat again pearly his brow. "I know it now," he said.

"Well?" urged Norton frigidly.

"Well, when I saw him—when I saw him swimming like that, I said—I said: 'There's the man for my team!' I knew he had played some before. And I thought, 'a man with grit enough to go into that sea is the man for my team.' It's grit I counted on most. So I started to *make* of him a man for my team. Then your darned College began to buck, and your darned Captain bucked, and you with your eternal silence. All this made me wild and, and—oh, hell!" He threw out his hands as if giving up.

But Norton, now, was sitting very straight in his chair.

"Do you mean to tell me," he began, "that you put McPherson on the team because—"

"Yes," said Stuyvesant, humbly. "Because he could——"

"And that I didn't make the team because you thought I——"

"Because I thought you couldn't——"

"No!" yelled Norton.

"Yes!" affirmed Stuyvesant meekly.

"No!"

"Yes." He nodded three times.

Jim Norton went back in his chair and began to laugh. To laugh and laugh and laugh. His body jarred from hat to toe; his head reared backward and his eyes rolled toward the ceiling; his mouth was half open and showed a flash of teeth. It wasn't a mellow laugh, though; rather a dry, unmoistened laugh. Some persons would not have mistaken that laugh. Stuyvesant was not of these. As it went on, he began to act like a coiled spring which, squashed, is gradually returning to its permanent shape. He rose by degrees in his chair; the perspiration dried from his brow; luster came back into his eyes; the swaggering elegance to his body. He smiled, tentatively. He smiled again, with more assurance. He began to laugh, discreetly, then in full sympathy with Norton's mirth.

"Ha-ha. I'm glad you take it that way, ha-ha. It's a long time ago, and it doesn't make much difference now. By Jove, ha-ha, it *was* funny——"

He stopped short in the middle of his sentence, because Norton had ceased to laugh. Norton had snapped his jaw on the laugh, had stiffened up in his chair, and was staring now at Stuyvesant with an expression so coldly violent that the latter drew back.

"It doesn't make much difference?" began Norton slowly and low. "It doesn't make much difference?" he repeated, faster and in a higher pitch. "It doesn't make much difference?" he said a third time, and his voice, now, whistled like steam.

"Listen, Stuyvesant." His voice dropped. "It's nine years since I left College. And what am I? An old hack-

horse. A dub. I haven't come through. I have within me, I know, all sorts of abilities—and I don't come through with them. I lack assurance. I don't bluff. I remember the first job I got as a reporter. I walked around the block of a certain building fourteen times every day for three weeks before I got up enough insolence to ask the city editor to let me work for nothing. Five years ago, when I came to New York, it was with a comrade of the craft. He had just seventy-five per cent. of my ability. He demanded an editorship—and got it. Anyone can get what he asks for in New York. It's by the asking they judge. I asked for an obscure chance to work up—and got that. I haven't worked up much. I do good work, more than good work, and all of the time. But no one seems to notice it. Because I don't, I suppose. Because I don't talk about it. There's that war threatening. I want to go; I don't ask; and no one thinks of me for it. To-day I looked at my hair, and it seems to be getting thin.

"Now, listen. The team you coached ten years ago, and of which you robbed me, do you know how it was composed? Nearly entirely of seniors. Others flunked out. Anyway, when it came to the election of a Captain of that team, for the next season, it was found that none of the regulars was left. The only 'Varsity men remaining were substitutes who had been called into the game toward the end; there was no regular 'Varsity man to elect. Had you not robbed me of my rightful place on the team, I should have been that only regular 'Varsity man. If you had not kept me out because I could not swim (ha-ha) I should have been the Captain of the next year's eleven. Do you think that would have made a difference?"

Stuyvesant jerked backward a bit, for the last sentence had been delivered leaning across the table and almost in his face.

"They elected Holliwell for Captain," Norton went on. "You remember; he was the tackle who went in for the last five minutes of the game. Many wanted to elect me, but it was against all the traditions—to elect for Captain a man

who had not played in the big game. I forbade it myself. Holliwell was elected. He was a poor, pitiful bungler. I was on the team, all right, but we were beaten.

"Had I been Captain, we should not have been beaten. It was bungling did it. We had the material. All through the season, I saw how we could turn out a winning combination. And even during the game, with that eleven so badly trained, I saw twice how we could win. But I wasn't Captain. So thus I ended my football days—at end, making the position only in my senior year, on a beaten eleven. And thus I entered life: with a defeat. But for you I should have ended my college career as the Captain of a winning team. I should have begun life with a victory. *Do you think that would have made any difference?* There's that job I want now as war-correspondent in the far East. Do you think, then, *I'd lack the nerve to ask for it?*"

Again Stuyvesant was forced to a little dodging movement. For again the question had been delivered at close range and with violence. For a second, his eyes flashed. Then he relaxed, helpless. "I'm sorry," he said—and threw his hand across the table.

But Norton did not see the hand. He was looking out to sea; far, far out to sea; beyond the rumbling breakers, beyond the smooth, oncoming undulations, far beyond, to a place where the waters, a blue plain, met, in a thin line, the light-green sky. And he looked there very long.

When he turned again, his manner had made an absolute change.

"You were a great bluff those days, Stuyvesant, weren't you?" he sighed good-naturedly.

It was as if a breeze of humor had passed, cool and light, through the stiffling of the situation. Stuyvesant picked up gratefully. He hated scenes. He smiled.

"Well, a bit of a bluff, a bit of a bluff," he admitted pleasantly.

"By Jove, the way you did bully-rag us! You came from the glittering East. You were the all-American full-back. You wore swell clothes—the sort one sees on the back-pages of magazines. You were a god to us. And you certainly took

advantage of it. Lordy, the way you did bully-rag us!"

He was easy and familiar. The table was between them; yet Stuyvesant imagined against his ribs a roguish elbow. Comfort returned to him. He stretched luxuriously in his chair. He turned his head a bit and sent to Norton the wink of his left eye.

Norton smiled, gently, tolerantly, reminiscently.

"I can still see you," he went on. "I can see you standing on the platform of the Gym. and we in our suits stretched on the floor beneath you, and you giving us one of your talks. What talks! How you did shame us! You could call us all kinds of names, and we never said 'boo.' And how you did play on that superior, that glittering, that mysterious East!"

Stuyvesant grinned.

"And by the way, Stuyvesant, that story of the Yale back who played half the game with his ankle broken, busted clean off, remember? That story, Stuyvesant, it was just a lie, wasn't it? A lie?"

"Eh?" said Stuyvesant, starting in his chair.

He looked at Norton, but Norton was still smiling.

"It was a lie, wasn't it? It wasn't true, was it?"

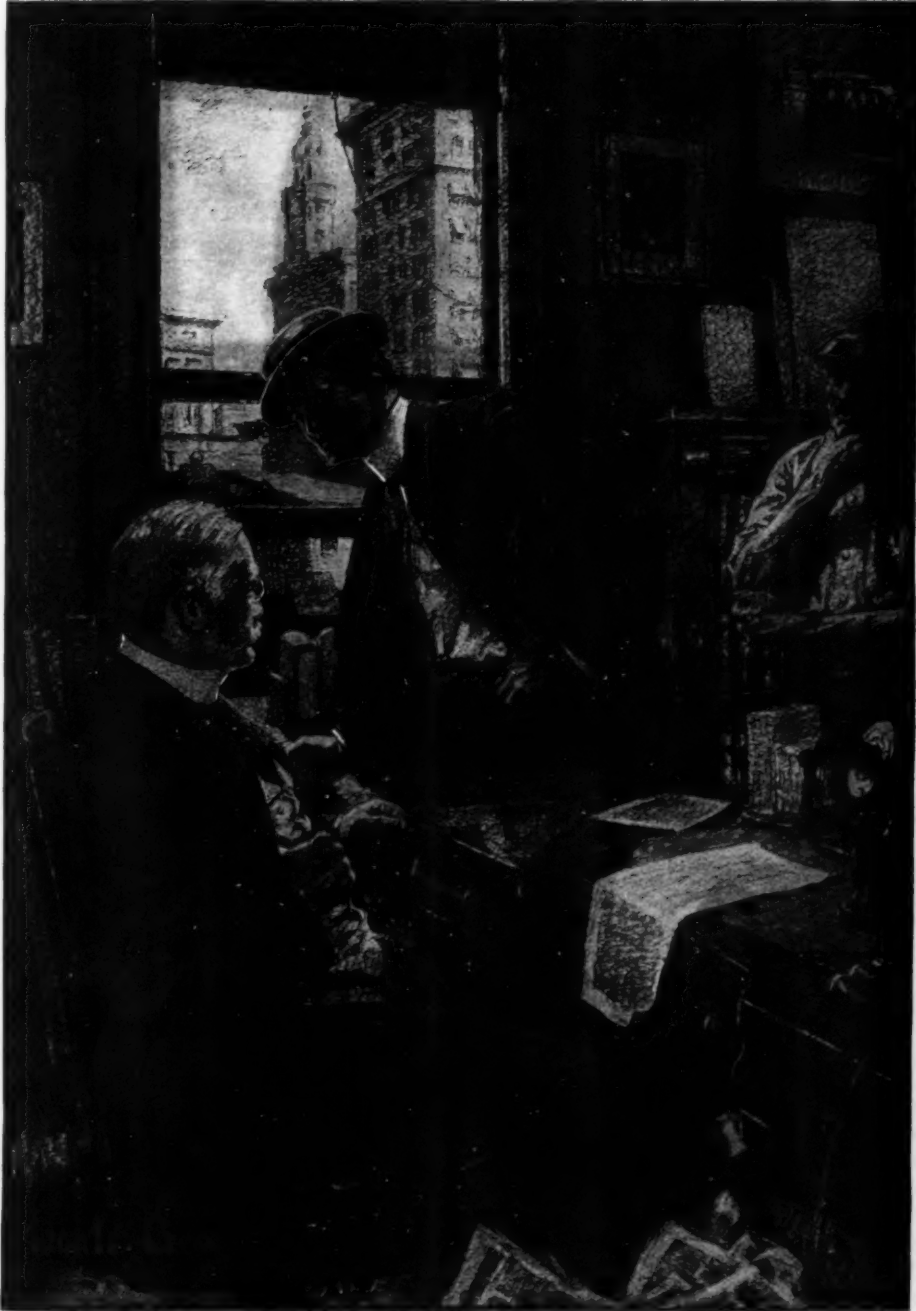
"Well—no. 'T was one of those stories to keep you boys going, don't you know. Give 'em grit, don't you know. Sort of fox-eating-Spartan-boy story. *That* wasn't true, was it? Did the Spartan kids lots of good, though."

Norton nodded sympathetically. "Of course," he said. "But all the rest that you told us, it was of the same piece, wasn't it? As a matter of fact, we boys were just as good—just as strong and gritty as the Eastern boys. I've seen the latter since."

"Well, you were a bit raw," objected Stuyvesant, judicially.

"We were just as good as they. And, Stuyvesant, as a matter of fact, although you did bluff us and humble us and ride rough-shod over us, we were just as good as *you*, weren't we—just as good men as you?"

Stuyvesant glanced toward him, a bit suspiciously. But Norton's manner was



"I'm the man for the job. I've the youth, the nose, the push.
And I can write. Color, fire, heart-beats, blood!"

still tinged with melancholic sweetness. "Of course, I don't know about that," said Stuyvesant. "I was on the all—"

But Norton was going right on, following his idea. His voice had sunk several tones.

"And I, whom you bullied, whom you cheated, whom you subjugated, I, all that time, was just as good a man as you, just as good a man, own it."

"Look here, Norton," said Stuyvesant. "I've told you how the thing happened. I explained the mistake I made. I've acknowledged that it was a fool mistake. I've apologized for it, and pretty meekly, too. Now, it seems to me that this is all there is to it. I don't know what you are getting at with all this 'I'm-as-good-as-you' business. If——"

"I was just as good a man as you were," repeated Norton inexorably. "Just as good; now, wasn't I?"

Stuyvesant looked out to the sea vexedly. He looked long, but seemed to get from the looking no equipoise. Suddenly his voice rang loud in rage. "No, no! Not by a damned sight!" he cried.

Norton's hand stole across the table and gripped Stuyvesant's arm.

"And right now, Stuyvesant," he said, still very low, "right now, I am a *better* man than you are."

"No; not by a damned sight! No, no!" snarled Stuyvesant.

Norton rose, his face illumined with the beginning of a fine satisfaction. He was just a bit breathless, like a runner who, through labyrinths and over hedges, has at last come to his goal. His hand was still on Stuyvesant's arm, and held it firmly.

"Come on," he said. "We will go out and see."

Stuyvesant rose to his feet without reluctance; together they went out upon a vacant lot behind the buildings, to "see."

The preliminaries did not take long. Out of the conversation on the veranda, each seemed to have acquired impatience. Hats, coats, collars, and ties flew to the sand. The two men were visible in immobility for a short moment, erect, looking into each other's eyes, and sculptured as stone. Then they were one—one

whirl out of which emerged fists immediately gathered in again, as if set on elastics.

Which had been the better man ten years before, it would have been difficult to decide. But it is a fact that Norton had preserved himself better than his more mercurial foe. Also, Stuyvesant's rage was the work of less than an hour. It had been seeded, had grown, had reached its high point since the time he had sat down with Norton at a peaceful table upon the veranda. Norton's was the result of ten years—ten years of careful cultivation. So, while Stuyvesant's was a charging, mad, explosive thing, Norton's was of solid foundation, hard and cold as granite, and as tireless. Stuyvesant's blows had a certain roundness of trajectory; Norton's were straight. They were straight and short, and diagonaled all curves.

After two minutes, Stuyvesant went down. A minute and a half later, he was down again. And when he went to earth a third time, he stayed there till Norton had helped him up; and, once up, he clung dizzily for a moment to the rigid, sustaining arm.

"You can outbox me," he said, when he could say something.

Somehow, he seemed less angry than might have been expected; in fact, when his face relaxed, a sheepish grin passed across it fleetingly.

"We'll wrestle a bit, then," said Norton.

They got down on the sand. At the end of three minutes Stuyvesant, very much out of wind, was on his back.

"What next?" he asked cheerfully.

They stood up, side by side, and looked out to sea. "Shall we swim?"

"No need of it, I think," answered Stuyvesant. "I give in on the swimming."

They remained side by side a while, uncertainly. Norton's glance, upon the sea, was wistful.

"No use," said Stuyvesant. "You don't get me out there."

Norton turned to him. The two smiled at each other, amiably.

"Well," said Norton, and he seemed now to be asking a favor, "there's one thing more you can do for me."

"What is it, old man?"

Norton, with his eyes, was measuring the distance between the restaurant and its out-house. "That's about sixty feet, is it not?" he asked, spanning the space with a gesture.

"About."

"I'm alone," murmured Norton, "so that is about the right width." He raised his voice to Stuyvesant. "One thing more. You get over there." He pointed to the far end of the area between the two buildings. "Pretend you have a ball under your arm, and see if you can pass me to a touch-down."

"All right," said Stuyvesant with relish, and trotted off to the extremity of the sandy little field.

Norton took a position in the center. "Go ahead," he cried, crouching.

Stuyvesant placed the hand of his left arm on his breast, the elbow against his ribs, as though he were carrying a ball, lowered his head, and started. He started as if by explosion. In a few strides he was at full speed. And, head sunk between shoulders, hair flying, knees pumping up and down high, straight, fast and smooth as piston-rods, he came superbly down the field in a replica of one of those famous old runs of his which brought roaring bleachers up standing.

Norton ambled up toward him slowly, on stiffened toes, feet apart in a wide base, every muscle vigilant. As they neared, he went slower and slower, and as he went slower he went lower, till finally he was moving in little springy strides, stiff of toes, his whole body gathered in a ball, hugging the ground which his loosely-dangling hands almost touched. Stuyvesant was obliquing a bit to the right. Norton dug toward him. He could now see the craft oozing out of the corner of Stuyvesant's slit-closed eye. Stuyvesant was only a few yards away now. Suddenly, he swerved to the left.

It was the most simple and deadly of all dodges—an almost imperceptible swerve while at full speed, and sudden as the strike of a snake. At the same time, his right arm went out, stiff at the elbow, like a lance. But if the swerve were quick as the strike of a snake, Norton's bound

was like the spring of a mongoose. For the fraction of a second his body appeared, flying horizontal and spread, and razing the earth. His shoulder, passing beneath Stuyvesant's parrying arm, struck his knee with a crunch. Stuyvesant went down as if mowed by a large and invisible scythe.

They remained on the ground together a moment, for they were both rather tired. Norton got up first. He got up and reached down a helping hand to Stuyvesant. When Stuyvesant had also risen, this grasp became a warm hand-shake, and the hand-shake a good-by.

"So long, old man; so long, old man," Norton was saying, pumping the arm up and down, and nervous, seemingly, with an immense desire of departure.

"Hold on a minute, you savage," cried Stuyvesant. Dropping the hand, he limped a few trial steps. "I think you've sprained my ankle."

"No!" exclaimed Norton with doubt and horror.

"Yes, sir," assured Stuyvesant, grimacing at each step. "You've sprained my ankle, all right."

"But you can walk? You can walk, can't you, Stuyvesant?" Norton demanded, very much concerned and very solicitous.

"Oh, yes," answered Stuyvesant doubtfully. "I can walk—some."

Norton heaved a big sigh of relief, and immediately began to vibrate with a return of his haste to be off. "Well then, I can git, eh, Stuyvesant, old man? You're all right, aren't you? I can go, now, old man?"

"But hold on," protested Stuyvesant. "Stay here awhile, can't you? What's your hurry, anyhow? Can't we go off somewhere and have dinner on this?"

"No, no, I can't. I must go—good-by, old man—you're all right, aren't you—so long—I must go—good-by, Stuyvesant, old man—see you later."

He was mumbling his words with the sincerity of the visitor who, while he is protesting of his desire to stay, is fairly stamping about the hall in search of his hat; and even as he mumbled, he was whisking up from the ground his coat, his vest, his collar, and tie. He thrust

them in a crushed bundle under his arm, and sprinted off toward the station, leaving Stuyvesant, petrified, on the beach.

As the train pulled out, a madman caught the rear platform. He was in his shirt-sleeves and held his clothes under his arm. Inside the coach, he put on collar, tie, vest, and coat, and with his fingers feebly combed his bedraggled hair.

An hour later, Henry Rudolph Hearn, millionaire owner of the *New York National*, smoking a long cigar in his private office on the forty-ninth floor of the *National* building, was startled by a cyclonic entry. The entry was Norton's. He slapped the door open and came in with his hat on his head. Not only on his head, but firmly tilted toward his right eye. Hearn looked up in surprise. Usually, persons did not enter this office this way. And especially this one. Mostly, he did not come into the private office at all. And when Hearn saw him in the reporters' room, a valuable but quiet man, he was mild, gentle, plodding, and took his hat off to owners.

Norton did not notice the proprietor's raised brows. He plumped down into a chair by the desk and immediately began to pound the table with his right fist.

"Mr. Hearn," he said, pounding, "I want you to send me to the war."

Hearn's eyes narrowed.

"To the war?"

"Yes, to the war. The war is getting ready, and is sure to break. There's still time to be there for the breaking. And I'm the man for the job!"

"Hold on—"

But Norton did not hold on. Instead, he pounded the table.

"I'm the man for the job. I've the youth, the nose, the push. And I can write. Write like hell. Tell you what you want, too. Clear, concise accounts of the big movements—and then the real

stuff. The living, burning details. The brigade camping in the gulch. The wounded trailing back to the ambulances. The little, pulsating, personal stories of obscure heroes. Fire, color, heartbeats and blood. The horse with the broken leg; the babe rescued in the loot. Clear, concise accounts of the big movements—and then color, fire, heart-beats, blood!"

Hearn pushed an electric button. From a side-door Rheinhardt, the managing editor, came in. "Tell him," said Hearn to Norton, nodding toward the waiting figure.

Nothing loath, Norton repeated his proposal, told about the "clear, concise accounts of big movements;" about the horse with the broken leg, the brigade in the gulch, the rescued baby, the fire, the color, the heart-beats, and the blood. Between every three words, his fist rose high and descended swiftly upon the impassive mahogany; his hat, each time, gave a little spring and landed with a new tilt toward the right eye.

"And I'm the man for the job!" he finished explosively.

"What do you think of it?" asked Hearn, looking up at Rheinhardt.

Rheinhardt raised his shoulders and his brows in discreet evasion.

"I'm asking you," said Norton, turning so that his back was square toward the managing editor and his chin toward the owner.

This movement discouraged the hat's last attempts at equilibrium. The right eye now disappeared entirely.

An instant the proprietor of the *New York National* hesitated. He took up his old cigar. And then—

"Go, pack your trunk," said Hearn soothingly. "You leave to-morrow."

He opened across the desk a long, blank book. "This is for your expenses," he said, picking up a pen.



You shook the hand of your father who tried to say, "God take care of you, boy"

Courting Days

BY SEUMAS MAC MANUS

Author of "Donegal Fairy Tales," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY C. F. PETERS

SPRECKLY, the cow, was not sold after all.

In the nick of time, by God's blessing, your oldest brother Barney, who had been brought out to America—to Wilkesbarre—by your Aunt Sheila, sent home a moneyed letter—three pounds in it—and Spreckly was saved. Then grateful hearts rejoiced.

Nevertheless you had left childhood's dreams behind. You were now in the first grips of a cruel world. You had quitted

school, able to read, write and figure—and you were in the South Park plying a spade between your father and your elder brother, digging foot for foot with each, manfully and well. You did all kinds of work on your father's little patch for three years—till younger brothers were fit to take your place.

Then, on the morning of Old May Day, you rose very early and took the hearty breakfast which your mother had ready for you—tea and bread and eggs on this momentous occasion. And you tied up in the large, red handkerchief your mother gave you, your sadly-few little duds, shook the hand of your

This is the second of a group of four "memory sketches" of Ireland by Mr. MacManus. The first, "Barefoot Days," appeared in The Red Book Magazine for July.—Editor.

father, who tried hard to say, "God take care of you, boy!" took your mother's kiss and the hot tear that she let fall on the back of your hand, mumbled a promise not to forget her warnings or your prayers, reverently blessed yourself as, to a sprinkling of holy water, you crossed the threshold, set your bundle upon your stick over your shoulder, and, too cowardly to take even one backward glance at the mother who through mist of tears watched you from the door, faced the twenty miles tramp to the far town of Donegal, where the Hiring-Market was that day held.

You were launched upon life, now, at sixteen, and many a long, long thought did your young breast harbor on that morning journey! And many and many a time did the longing heart of you race back to the poor, little thatched cabin situate on the cold shoulder of Cruchathree—race back and, taking position in the chimney corner, hungrily watch every move of father and mother, sister and little brothers!

You found yourself in The Town—in the Market Square, taking a position in a great line of boys and girls, all with their little bundles in their hands, and each like yourself, an exile from his or her own loved hillside or cherished glen. And men and women, better dressed, and fatter and rosier than you were used to see, were walking back and forward in front of you, viewing you up and down and commenting audibly upon your probable virtues and certain defects.

These were your prospective masters and mistresses—farmers and their wives from the rich country beyond the hills. The town of Donegal was built so close to the border-line between hill and plain that it naturally became the meeting place and mart, for mistress and maid, master and man.

After criticising the whole line of boys and girls, three or four times, and passing in front of you every time, a comfortable farmer and his wife spoke to you at length, and asked you to step out till they'd get a better look at you. And when they had asked you what kind of work you could do, and what was

your ability (strength), and whether you could milk twelve cows and churn the produce, and mow and sow, and set and dig, feed pigs and thresh the corn, they requested your terms for the half-year till Old Hallowday. You asked six pounds, and they, professing shock, offered four, and finally, after haggling for three hours, and coming and going several times, and getting a dozen different friends to help them pull down your price, closed with you for five pounds ten, with alternate Sundays and Holy days free. And on their car, you, with your little bundle, were borne that evening twelve miles further from the home where your heavy heart still stayed—and glad sight of which could not greet your eyes for half a year to come.

Weary was the work, and light the pleasure under the roof of the stranger. You arose and began your duties at five in the morning, and you ended and went to bed at ten at night. You had no five minutes to yourself in all that time. There were no dances, no raffles, no weddings, no sprees, no markets, no fairs for you. Besides, these wealthy people, worth almost hundreds of pounds, who lived on the rich plains, were not the same at all as your own people of the hills. They had mountains of money in the bank, but not a mole-hill of merriment in their hearts. They wore shop-cloth, and had a suit for Sunday, and ate great hearty meals, with either fish or meat at their Sunday dinner always, but they never knew an idle hour—nor could know how to enjoy one if it were given them. They were christened without sporting, married without courting, and buried without waking. They were heathens, that was the short and long of it. Your time among them was your time in purgatory. You didn't feel *yourself* at all and groaned in bondage. Rejoicing, you thanked God with a full heart, when, at the end of two years, the call came for you to return from captivity. Your two next-younger brothers were now going to hire, your elder brother had been taken away to the Land of Promise—to Wilkesbarre—and your father needed you at home to help on the little farm. 'T was then like the beginning of a

new life to you. Everybody in all the countryside was poor enough to be happy, and to take Sundays as days of peaceful relaxation, and summer evenings and winter nights for social intercourse and innocent enjoyment. The poor boys and girls of home were as merry-hearted as if money had never cursed the world. Every boy of them had a girl-of-his-heart—a *cailin deas*—and every girl had her Share-of-the-World. It was in the

there to give the boys and girls who loved to saunter on them, excuse for meeting at such a romantic spot as the bridge of Glen Coagh. Trees grew there—both above and below it. A mysterious murmuring river, that you always heard crooning to itself some quaint old tune, ran far beneath, hidden for the most part by the blackthorns and hazels that reached to one another from bank to bank to hide it. But a glitter, a glance,



Your father needed you at home to help on the little farm

Spring—the glorious Spring, when you returned from slavery, and as if it were yesterday, you vividly remember those wonderful moonlight nights when, your day's work done, and your little supper dispatched, you walked nightly with Nelly Carribin over the brow of Knockderry to the boys' and girls' meeting-place on the Glen bridge. At this little bridge three or four roads casually came together, and, having crossed it, casually wandered away again—in a fashion as though they had only just come to see what the boys and girls were about, anyhow. Though I really think they came

and a gleam, here and there, discovered the well-guarded one's whereabouts. Pools by the bridge of Glen Coagh were troutful and the bushes were birdful, and all around was a gentle, charmed fairy haunt—fairies, though, the gentlest of the Gentle People, and most loving, who delighted to see the boys and girls meet and mingle, and to hear the music of their merry hearts resound upon the bridge. A fiddle or a flute was always in their company. Sometimes a wandering bagpiper happened along, and underneath the arching trees, on the moonlight mottled road they danced the jig

and ran the reel to the magic of his piping. The play of the moonlight on the rosy faces and black heads and fair heads and red heads of the girls was something that might well entrance angels, let alone you and the rest of the mountain mortals. Oh, the beauty of those moonlit evenings shining far down Memory's wave with a light that can seldom be forgotten and never effaced! The innocence of those meetings and matings! The joys of them! Not stingy was the world in bestowing delights on you since then, but not all of these together—sweet though they have been, could nearly equal the charm unspeakable of those moonlight meetings on the bridge of Glen Coagh in the white, white, Springtime—the Springtime of your life and of the years.

The long, long summer gloamings that seemed to have no ending were happy times for you upon your hill-sides. Especially happy was Midsummer

night, Bonfire night, when the boys and girls from far and near gathered to the highest hilltop—the top of Donegore—and piled a bonfire whose blaze was seen and praised by other eager bonfire builders fifty miles afar. By the bonfire that night you danced with the girl of your choice, sung songs to your heart's content, and at midnight, taking up a burning brand, described the charmed circle 'round the crops and 'round the cattle, and 'round the houses where Christians dwelt—a circle which for twelve months was as a wall of brass against all evil, ban and blight. Frequently, on the summer evenings, you met the boys at the cross-roads, and tried leaps, and threw the stone with them, till, after the cows were milked, the bare-headed girls, in twos and threes came on the scene, and the dance was begun. You were a bad boy on Sunday, and the moment Mass was over you adjourned to the hand-ball court—Peg Quinn's gable—

and you, the champion of the upper end of the parish, engaged for the fifty-fifth time Tim Griffith, the champion of the parish's lower end; while all the parish ranged itself around three sides of the alley, alternately yelling till you feared its lungs would crack, and holding its breath till there was imminent danger of bursting, and finally doing its endeavor to pull the arms out of you under pretence of handshaking when you had beaten Tim this time by a single ace. Or you produced your caman, which, unregenerate that you were, you had during Mass hidden in the long grass that grew on some poor devil's grave, and you joined the caman team that was going to Glen Mor "to take the consait out o' the Glen boys"—though maybe to return with the conceit clean knocked out of yourself.



Sometimes a wandering bagpiper happened along

You were fresh enough in the afternoon to join the group of girls that gathered on the hillside to bask in the sun and show their O-so-neat-and-trig white linen dresses, and their O-so-beautifully - combed - and - shining heads of hair, and sit and make merry with these till the sun, who loved indulgently to dally these summer Sunday evenings, felt compelled, at last, to leave the scene. Across the valley you heard the music of the young people's laughter on the opposite hillside; and below, you could see an occasional couple crawling along the path by the river's bank.

When came the gloaming, with a black-haired girl you took that path yourself, your pace too, snail-like. Returning again, alone, you walked briskly and whistled light-heartedly. Another beautiful summer Sunday had ended, and you would have to be afoot betimes in the morning, the scythe on your shoulder—for your father's meadow was now for mowing.

How is it, anyhow, you wonder, that there are now no Sundays like those Sundays! No Summers like those Summers! No Springs like those Springs! How is it that the sun does not shine so bright, or the moon so soft, any longer, or that the gloaming does not fall so tardily, or so soothingly, or so blissfully, or carry with it the enchantment that those gloamings used, in your courting days? You don't know how it is, of course; but it is.

Well, it cannot be helped! I suppose the world is getting old and careless.

There was time for everything in those days—time and to spare—time enough for work, and plenty of time for play. You had for your enjoyment not merely the Spring evenings, and Summer twilights, and Winter nights, and



A fiddle was always in their company

every one of the fifty-two Sundays—and ten or twelve lovely Holy days—but you had—cream of them all—the Harvest Fair day at Knockagar.

That was a day looked forward to by the boys and girls for eleven months—the greatest day of all the year! There would be assembled all the boys and all the girls, for miles and miles, and miles more on top of that again, with their new suits and dresses, and all the pocket money—the hoarding of months—their heaviest purses and lightest hearts; their gayest wiles and brightest smiles. You had half-a-crown and a new homespun suit yourself. And the girl you were now favoring, Molly Gilbride, had a new dress and a new, bright ribbon in her shining, fair hair—and she would go

home with another new ribbon, you would answer for it!

Yes, that was the whitest and brightest and gayest great day of all the year—a day for which the girls were preparing for months and months beforehand, and of the wonderful incidents of which they talked for months afterwards—of what old boys they had seen, and new boys whose acquaintances they had made; of the boys who had nodded to them, and the boys who had chaffed and chatted; and what boys had passed and repassed them with hung heads and blushing cheeks, fain, but fearful, to speak to them. Above all they talked of what boys had walked them up and down the street and treated them to fairlies and made them merry company in the tents and saw them home by the light of the loveliest harvest-moon that ever shone on earth!

You met and made merry with many bright mountain girls on that blessed Harvest Fair day of Knockagar. And you thought you never saw the girls look so winsome, with such entrancing blushes, and captivating shy looks, with their hair so shiny and dresses so neat, and colors so bright, and with oh! such indescribable, fascinating, heart-capturing Something about them as still makes that great day so strikingly stand out, haloed with a golden glow in Memory's whitest vista!

Still very distinct in your memory, too, are the marvelously learned discourses of the great foreign doctor who, through pure love of mankind, was bestowing on the tramping multitude—just for the cost of bottling—his elixirs for cure of all human ills; and the hair-raising and marvelous magic of the Black-Art-Man (marvelous at soul price to him, so blood-curdling to contemplate); and the yelling of the apple-hucksters who pelted with fruit the passers-by to convert them into customers; and the bawling of the ballad-singers, whose absorbing epics drew dense crowds open-mouthed, around them; and the dilisc sellers; and the tricksters; and the great white-roofed tents in rows and rows, some for the sale of fairlies to boys and girls, some for eating and some for

drinking; and the forest of blackthorns that flashed in the air where the joyous fever of a fight ran wild!

You have still in memory that Harvest Fair too, for there it was that you met The Farmer's Boy—the Boy whose name was known to none, but whose envied fame was familiar to every brave fellow within a hundred miles whose heart warmed for suffering country—the Boy who carried on his head a price that might well have tempted the richest, yet never induced the poorest to betray him! Your eye brightened, and your cheek flushed, and your figure straightened, when you found suddenly whose hand you were shaking! In a twinkling the Boy's wonderful gray eyes had, you felt, searched the inmost corners of your soul. And you will never forget the tide of pride that surged through your veins, when, dropping your hand, the Boy simply said, to those who had introduced him, "He'll do."

And that afternoon in the gloom of a byre, among cows that glanced over-shoulder wonderingly, you and five other stout fellows knelt, and took from the Boy the oath which ever since you have religiously kept—the oath of love and loyalty to the dear Little Dark Rose—and scorn and defiance to the Dark-Haired-One's oppressor. It gave your heart a pang to think that for cause so noble and purpose so sacred, you had to conceal yourself in a cow-house—only a momentary pang, though. You strode into the fair again a prouder man and more daring. Even Molly, wondering and admiring, remarked this. You just smiled, and bought her the best ribbon the Fair and your finances could afford.

And when, accompanying her home that evening, you sat her down underneath the thorn, just a stone-throw from her own house, and she laid her head on your strong shoulder, you told her the beautiful secret (which brought to her eyes tears of joy) that you were now one of *The Boys*, Molly without speaking, pressed your hand in both of hers. It needed not her speech; for you knew that her soul said to your soul, "In Ireland all men who are men must divide their hearts between two loves." Stoop-



"In Ireland all men who are men must divide their hearts between two loves"

ing down, you kissed Molly's white forehead. Then, looking away through the gloaming, as both of you sat silent, you saw the mysterious meetings in the Glen and on the hilltop, and in the solitude of crowds (as on this day) and you heard mysterious, glad tidings from the North and from the South whispered at those gatherings, and marvelous tidings from the greater Ireland far to the West, where patiently watched and strenuously worked uncountable thousands of leal ones whose hearts would never forget. You kissed Molly again that night, as you went with her up the boreen to her own door.

When you were shearing the golden corn on the South Side next day you were in a reflective mood, your comrades noted. You were sweetly pensive, for you heard what the corn said, rustling as you cut your way through it. It said, "Molly! Molly! Molly!" and then, "Molly Gilbride! Molly Gilbride!"

Molly somehow stood up before you in a new light. You used to chat and

chaff with her, and then with the next girl you met; and you thought you knew her, and all of them. But now you unreservedly agreed with the corn when it said, "You didn't know Molly, didn't know Molly!" The real Molly revealed herself that time she pressed your hand last night. You were learning to know her now, and the study was sweet and all-absorbing. That very evening you must go for another lesson—and frequently after.

It was a long study—but you were not to be daunted. You found harvest moons conducive to progress, and Autumn gloamings, and the bridge of Glen Coagh. When the Winter evenings were on, you found it favored successful study to drop into Cormac Gilbride's o' nights and, sitting by the bright blazing fire, exchange pipes with Cormac, and opinions with his good wife Sorcha—without saying a word at all, at all, to Molly, who, with eyes downcast and cheek flushed—you noted all this with the tail of your eye—was absorbed in her spin-

ning wheel in the corner. You included her, of course, in your incoming blessing, at seven, and heard her join with father and mother in giving you outgoing blessing at eleven, but nothing more passed between you—seemingly. Yet it is a question whether these lessons were not the most profitable and all satisfying.

At the weekly winter-night dances given in the hospitable cabin kitchens, here and there among the hills, your study of the new Molly steadily advanced. There you met many bright-eyed girls, but none like Molly; and there she saw many tall, brave boys—but none like you. You knew this, because, going home from every such dance, you compared notes on the point. At last, one night, going home from the best dance of them all—the dance given by Farrell McKeown the fiddler, in Dominic Gallagher's spacious house at Killymard—you both agreed finally, that 't was waste of time for either to be seeking to find the equal of the other—it was a human impossibility, and you would henceforward give up trying.

Next day you spoke to your father as you wrought side by side with him in the field, saying you believed you had come to the time o' day when you ought to be thinking of settling down and marrying a wife. And your father, after a minute's silence, said: "Well, Johnny *ahasgy*, I think it would be no sin. I'll give ye my blissin' and the far end o' the farm—five acres of clay land—and help ye to rise a house on it. Have ye a good girl in your eye?"

"Molly Gilbride isn't a bad girl," you insinuated, with your head bent very low over your work, so that your father could not see the blush that mantled your cheek.

"Her father and mother's daughter shouldn't be," your father replied. "They're dacent, industr'ous, right-living people, and everybody's good word is on them. I'll never hang my head for a son of mine marryin' into that family."

Your mother—for there was nothing that could escape her—knew as sure as there was a head on her, that there were carryings-on between yourself and Molly. But she supposed it was all right.

She never had heard a word again' the girl. And she had to confess that she was as neat-stepped-out a colleen as went into Killymard chapel. She was well come-home, for her father and mother were both of dacent stock. So she ordered your father to step over with you, that night, to Cormac Gilbride's and fix up things, if they were willing.

It was an awkward, eye-shirking jaunt—that walk with your father to the Gilbrides' that night. Your deep-stirred soul was in a turmoil of emotions, and some of them were curiously conflicting. You wanted to talk and you wanted to be silent; your exalted head knocked familiarly against the astonished stars, while your heedless feet tripped drunkenly upon the stones of the path.

At last, however, you saw the fire-light glistening through the window of Cormac Gilbride's house; you stood with your father at the doorway and knocked; the portentous hour was come!

You did chat with Molly that night in the corner, with your backs to the company, while your father in the opposite corner, debated with Cormac and his wife, compared the prestige of your respective families, and finally insisted that, as his had the more renowned pedigree, Cormac should balance things by bestowing on Molly fifty pounds more than he intended.

At length the match was fixed—Molly to have a hundred pounds, a cow, a calf, and household linen. And yourself was to receive the five acres promised, a little house built on it, and the venerable Spreckly into the bargain. When you walked home alongside your father that night your step was very springy and your head was held very high, and you felt yourself a great deal bigger and stouter and stronger than ever you had thought yourself before. It dawned upon you that you were a man now. Your eyes were looking far into the future. With five acres and a hundred pounds, and—above all—with a good woman like Molly, small wonder that look was bright and brave and hopeful.

God bless the both of ye, and have ye in his keeping!

The Rose Colored Scarf

BY ELEANOR M. INGRAM

Author of "The Amazing Adventure," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

(See Frontispiece)

THE girl in the speeding motor car nestled deeper into the billows of fur enveloping her, surveyed the snow-blanching country landscape with her large, exceedingly lustrous eyes, and sighed daintily. It was a sigh that demanded the response of a solicitous question or a soothing sympathy, but only the subdued drone of the beautiful machine filled the succeeding pause. After a moment, the girl impulsively sat up and leaned forward, addressing the chauffeur who was the only other occupant of the seven-passenger car.

"Darrell, I am hungry," she imparted, her smooth, imperious voice made individual by little unexpected tricks of inflection that shot it warmly through like the gold glints in a topaz surface.

The straight shoulders in front stirred; the chauffeur turned his head and, for a fractional instant, his gray eyes glanced back at the speaker.

"Very well, Miss Carrington. I shall stop at the Golden Arms, a mile ahead? It is the best hotel near here, I think."

Miss Carrington folded her small, gloved hands on the back of the seat, lifting her chin clear of the silvery furs. Only a very handsome girl could have borne the somber neighborhood of gray furs, drooping gray-beaver hat, and the background of gray winter sky, but in the midst of universal colorlessness her face glowed like a tropic flower in the North. She combined extreme brilliancy of tint with delicacy of features—a combination not frequent.

"Darrell," she requested patiently, "will you observe the interior of the car you are driving, instead of the road upon which you are driving it?"

He swept the view ahead with a comprehensive glance, and obeyed her.

"You see—my aunt did not return with me," she explained, as he resumed his former attitude. "And I never have entered a restaurant alone in my life."

"I might inquire whether there is a private dining-room for a lady traveling alone," Darrell suggested, enlightened. "It is still thirty miles to the city."

"There will not be a private dining-room; I know that inn."

"I could find the head-waiter, and have him meet you and conduct you to a quiet table, Miss Carrington. I am quite sure you would suffer no annoyance."

She moved her head disapprovingly.

"That would not do at all," she demurred, "because I am not facing the mental attitude of other people, but my own. I should be uncomfortable; I am an American, but an American educated on the Continent. I should eat no luncheon; I should suffer."

Darrell swept past a farmer's sledge.

"Nevertheless, pray stop at the Golden Arms." She stroked her muff meditatively. "It is thirty miles to New York, and I am hungry. Will you find it troublesome to lunch with me, I wonder?"

The car's wheels spared an hysterical chicken by the narrow grace of an inch.

"Miss Carrington!"

"Pardon my unconventionality. *You* would not invite *me*, although I—well, angled. Am I to famish?"

He checked the pace of the car, without looking back to her.

"Miss Carrington, that building ahead is the inn. Do I seriously understand that you wish me to accompany you to the public dining-room?"

"I think it would be more pleasant. Of course, if you *insist* upon taking me to the chauffeurs' dining room— That would probably surprise everyone, as I suppose we look like any other pair of motorists, but I cannot dictate to my escort."

Darrell's head lifted expressively. Miss Carrington was given the sensation of having thrown down her little gauntlet and seeing its challenge caught up. He twisted the car sharply into a driveway, heedless of skidding wheels, jammed down the brakes and came to a standstill before the veranda of the Golden Arms. Flinging off the robe, he descended from his seat while removing his goggles, and went to open the tonneau door.

The deference with which he bared his head and offered his hand to the lady suggested chivalry rather than servitude; the pale January sunshine illumined pleasantly his firmly-drawn, rather grave young face. Miss Carrington regarded him calmly as she rose from her nest of furs and accepted his aid to descend.

"Take the car around to your garage, and blanket her radiator unless the place is heated," Darrell directed the attendant who had advanced, the careless self-assurance perfectly natural.

There were a few guests in the dining-room, who looked up with the usual half-envious curiosity aroused by the entrance of a party of motorists, contemplating the girl in gray and her escort as they moved across to a table opposite a geranium-filled window. Darrell assisted Miss Carrington to remove her wraps, and passed the fragrant, satin-soft garments to the waiter before slipping off his own coat, conventionally emotionless. Uninterested, the other diners withdrew their attention from the couple.

"I am afraid," Darrell regretted, to his companion, "that you will have to tell me what you would like me to order. It would be too bad, since you are hungry, to mistake your tastes."

Sylvia Carrington continued to draw off her long, gray gloves; if there was any malice underlying her reply, neither tone nor expression betrayed the fact.

"I have no tastes—I like everything

in the world except caviar and cheese," she indolently assured him. "And I hate to choose my own luncheon, Mr. Darrell."

The prefix to his name forced a slight contraction of his straight brows, but he glanced up at the attending waiter and proceeded without embarrassment to acquit himself of the task imposed.

He did so excellently.

"You have made me hungrier," reproached the girl. "I wonder how long they take to serve one, here."

"We are going to find out. I wonder how you will explain when some of your friends or relatives happen in," he retorted.

"They will not; this is not a French farce."

"No, it is an American tragedy."

She lifted her dark eyes, startled.

"Were you not starving by rapid degrees?" he amplified.

She laughed, conceding his point with a gesture. The ease with which he accepted their temporary change of position, the excitement of the daring situation, had flushed her smooth cheeks and added a brilliancy to her glance. There was color in Darrell's face also, but his gray eyes remained steadily cool, almost watchful. One would have said he was on guard, following the twinkling rapier-point of her light, whimsical mood.

"The last two winters I spent South," she remarked, presently. "Now, I cannot enjoy the cold enough; I think I had snow-nostalgia. I should like to gather armfuls of the white stuff, make snowballs and pitch them at some one."

"If you would like to come out on that lawn, after luncheon, I will let you pitch them at me," he offered generously. "I grew up in the country, in northern Maine—you couldn't find enough snow to bother me."

She surveyed her small, fragile hands.

"Thank you so much. But my fingers might ache. In Maine? I suppose that is why you can endure our New York weather so well. I have often wondered how you could possibly drive the limousine hour after hour in the zero winds; last month, for instance, on the trip to Albany—"

She broke the sentence, suddenly aware of its indiscreet implication; then too late she realized that the stop emphasized the admission that she had watched him with interest. A singular expression swept Darrell's face; he moved as if to speak, but altered his intention and also remained silent.

The waiter was again beside them. When he withdrew, Miss Carrington caught up the first theme presenting itself and began to talk, the graceful, piquant chat of nonchalant ease and leisurely intervals which implies neither intimacy nor coldness. Darrell seconded her charmingly; he was a sympathetic listener and amused her with drolly picturesque anecdotes of a touring trip he had once made through Mexico. There were no more mistakes of allusion.

With the dessert, Miss Carrington glanced up at the timepiece opposite.

"Three o'clock!" she exclaimed. "Dear me, and I due at home at half-past! Mr. Darrell, we shall have to explain that a tire blew out."

"If you wish, Miss Carrington."

At some quality in his tone, her eyes slowly widened.

"You do not like that?" she marveled.

He shrugged his shoulders, his color rising.

"Oh, pardon, I ventured no criticism," he apologized, indifferently. "Only it always seems a pity to have to do that sort of thing, doesn't it? Probably I am prejudiced. The first time I indulged in a social prevarication—I told a gossiping old maid that my mother was out, when in fact she was busy in the kitchen—my father conducted me to his study for a strenuously painful interview. He said I would go to hell."

"Dear me! Then, I must explain that we stopped for luncheon? I am afraid they will never understand."

"Well, one might perhaps say one was delayed, without details."

She clapped her hands, delighted.

"There, there! You are planning to conceal facts, as well as I. A half-deceit is as bad as a whole one."

"You are perfectly right," he conceded. "My father undoubtedly predicted my future dwelling place."

"Your father must have been very severe."

All her training could not subdue the note of curiosity in her comment. But no satisfaction was yielded.

"He was," drily confirmed Darrell.

Miss Carrington began to draw on her gloves.

The waiter had approached to set upon the table a little tray within which lay the usual slip of paper. Very deliberately Darrell drew it toward him to read the amount, but first directed to the girl a regard of cold, steadfast warning, of a significance arrogant in its command. She met it fully; her soft lips parted, her beautiful black eyes dilated—the response springing to her transparent face blended mirth, astonishment, admiration, even coquetry, but neither mockery nor rebellion.

While Darrell paid the check, Miss Carrington achieved fastening her gloves. After which he assisted her into the silver-gray furs against which her radiant beauty glowed gem-like. The deferential waiter bowed them out of the dining-room.

The long hall of exit was empty and dimly lighted through stained-glass. Moving down its length, Miss Carrington spoke a trifle hurriedly, as if feeling that with their return to the car this episode must close.

"You have been extremely good, Mr. Darrell. I thank you very much—I have enjoyed our luncheon."

They were side by side. As she raised her soft, half-troubled face to him in speaking, Darrell fiercely stooped and kissed her.

Out across the ice-fringed veranda Sylvia Carrington hurried toward the waiting automobile, her head bent, her face concealed between drooping hat and high collar. Darrell opened the car door for her, but did not offer to aid her entrance. He clasped the goggles across his eyes before giving largess to the attendant and taking his seat. With a swelling purr the car rolled from the portals of the Golden Arms, not to return.

The pace kept was the highest speed compatible with safety from police in-

terference, but an early winter dusk was graying all things to indeterminate bulks and outlines when the city was reached. Through the noisy, teeming streets and avenues Darrell drove, until he halted the car before the massive Carrington house. There, he descended from his place and came to the tonneau door.

"I have committed the unforgivable sin," he said quietly. "You had trusted me, and I broke the trust. If I had lived as do the men whom you meet daily, perhaps some finer memory would have kept my self-control more firm—I do not know. At least, you may be very sure that I have my punishment. I shall of course leave Mr. Carrington's service to-night. May I open the door?"

"I fancy," returned Miss Carrington, subduedly calm, "that the unforgivable sin may be quite different; I believe, indeed, that the classic so states. Are you, then, fond of Hawthorne?"

His gauntleted hand shut hard on the door-buckle.

"You are pleased to play with me, Miss Carrington. If I read Hawthorne or have any tastes you did not expect from my position, I am nevertheless a professional chauffeur and not a millionaire *incognito*. I have no romantic excuse to offer. Let me suggest this conversation between us will cause remark."

She rose, her face completely shaded.

"If you wish to avoid remark, it will hardly do to resign your position to-night," she indicated. "Why not to-morrow?"

"It is for you to decide, Miss Carrington."

"Thank you. I think that will be better. Good-night, Mr. Darrell."

His white teeth caught his lips; for the second time the prefix to his name scored.

"That sarcasm was unnecessary," he stated briefly.

She was stepping down past him, but at that she turned swiftly, in a sudden hot flare of passion, her large eyes flashing through the dusk.

"Do you expect me to allow the status of a servant to the man who has kissed me, Mr. Darrell? You have a singular conception of my pride. Good-night, sir."

Dazed, Darrell remained standing by the car. The flower-like fragrance that attended her presence still lingered on the sharp, night air, the flash of her last glance still blurred his vision, although the house doors had closed behind her.

Presently the chauffeur took Mr. Carrington's automobile to its garage.

II

Mr. Carrington was in his library, that evening, when his daughter Sylvia came to him. They understood each other rather better than anyone else understood either of them, these two; there was a resemblance between them both physical and mental.

"Papa, I am twenty-five years old," she declared.

"You do not look it, my dear," returned the gentleman, his eyes twinkling underneath their gray brows.

The girl smiled, leaning against the pillared mantel and gazing down at the ruddy flames on the hearth. Miss Carrington in motor costume was charming; in an evening gown of pale rose-color, her round young throat clasped by faintly-pink tourmalines, her hair banded with the soft color, she was something more. Over her shoulders she wore a long, gossamer scarf of a delicate rose shade heavily fringed with silver, in which she absently wound her fingers as she spoke.

"Claudia is engaged at eighteen, Millicent is married at twenty-one. Mama is quite right; I have been deplorably slow. Papa, I am going to be married—give me your support."

Mr. Carrington rose and kissed his daughter's cheek; he had an enchanting manner, rather formal for America.

"My dear, I am delighted! Who is the excessively fortunate man? There have been so many—sighing."

"Mr. Roger Darrell."

"I am afraid I have not met him."

"Pardon, you meet him every day, when he drives you to and from your office."

The change in Mr. Carrington's composed placidity amounted to a convulsion.

"My chauffeur?"

"At present."

It was characteristic of both that there was no scene, merely a pause for realization.

"Of course, if he had not been very different from a chauffeur, this could not have happened," she added, after a moment. "You know that."

"Have you considered the consequences?" her father demanded, when he had quite recovered outward poise.

Her flush deepened.

"Yes. But surely we are clever enough to arrange things, if you help me. One need not tell the public everything. One might live abroad, for a while."

Mr. Carrington passed his hand across his forehead in reeling bewilderment.

"It will not do," he decided, with finality.

Sylvia Carrington moved across and took a low chair opposite, turning full to him the strange, irradiated beauty of her clear face and deep eyes.

"Look at me," she requested.

He looked, and continued to look. The flame was lighted and burning, her body was but the translucent vase for its holding. In one illuminating hour, the greatest of all things had come to her.

"I," said Mr. Carrington, discouraged, "I must send for Darrell."

She rose, crimsoning vividly.

"No, no! He does not know, Papa. I mean, he has not spoken to me of, of such things—he intends to leave here at once and go away."

"But, how—?"

Miss Carrington checked the question with a gesture, the crimson invading even her neck and bosom.

"To-day—he kissed me."

Mr. Carrington fell back in his chair, stunned. His daughter sat down again, drawing the scarf about her and keeping her head bent musingly.

"Until to-day—until he did that—I never knew I thought of him," she confided, slowly. "Now, I know that I have been watching him for months. He is, *different*. I think it began on the day he made Millicent so angry by stopping the car short to avoid striking a squirrel, in the park. And then, that night at the

cup race when it was so cold, and he told me that there was an extra fur coat, if I would like it! I wore it, and did not find out until dawn that he had given me his. You have always given me everything I wanted, papa; I cannot learn denial now."

"Nevertheless, I must send for Darrell. You had better go, Sylvia."

Master in his own household Mr. Carrington was, when he cared to be. She recognized it, and faltered.

"I cannot bear that you should talk to him and I not know what passes," she rebelled. "If you are sending for him, I will go there, in the alcove, where he cannot see me. I *must* hear."

"Well— Will you give me your word not to interfere with my statement of the case and my views? I can take your word—not usual with a woman, my dear."

She hesitated, then promised.

"Yes."

He took the desk telephone to summon the chauffeur's attendance. Miss Carrington crossed to the book-lined alcove, let fall the heavy curtains before it, and established herself in a chair within the recess.

The rose-colored scarf had slipped from her shoulders; a shimmering heap of gauze, it lay just outside the curtains, on the polished floor.

Darrell entered the library with his usual quiet self-possession; nothing in his bearing or appearance distinguished him from any gentleman who might call there. There was much excuse for Sylvia Carrington, her father reluctantly conceded.

"Since we are not meeting as employer and employee," Mr. Carrington opened, "perhaps you would better sit down, Darrell. Will you try a cigar?"

The faintest white change crossed the visitor's face. Only the girl in the alcove could estimate his startled shock. But he came over without confusion.

"Thank you; I do not smoke, Mr. Carrington," he returned, and took the chair Sylvia had left.

"Ah, I am sorry," regretted the older man. "Tobacco soothes the nerves, and I am extremely anxious that our discussion shall contain no acrimony. For that rea-

son I say nothing of the point of honor involved in your use of your position of trust to win the affection of my daughter. For although Miss Carrington denies that you have actually proposed marriage to her, I know very well that a young girl does not give her heart and intend to give her hand to a man who has not asked both."

Darrell's gray eyes kindled, but he stopped on the verge of speech and remained in silent endurance of the charge and of his own unutterable amazement.

"I am a practical man," resumed Mr. Carrington, after waiting for a reply. "Naturally, then, I sent for you, another man, when Miss Carrington told me that she had decided to become your wife. Ladies are not to be argued with. You spoke?"

"No."

"Of course, this is for you a question either of business or sentiment; for you, and me. Now, as a matter of business, my daughter's personal fortune is not large. I would be willing to offer—" He broke off abruptly. Darrell had looked at him, looked with the chill, imperious warning that had forbidden Sylvia Carrington's interference that afternoon, at the Golden Arms.

"I think we may assume that it is not a question of business," signified the chauffeur, coldly.

Mr. Carrington chose a fresh cigar, not because he wanted it, but because he wanted time.

"Then we pass to the question of sentiment," he responded, with a courtesy less ironic, and more hostile. "I have before seen such marriages as this proposed, Darrell, and they do not work. There has always resulted a period of inferno, and—a divorce. I do not say by any means that the men are always at fault. The women cannot stand the mill—the gossip in the newspapers, the grilling by the other women, the universal, contemptuous curiosity toward themselves and the contemptuous tolerance of their husbands. Loss of caste bites deep into them; they think it wont, but it does. You do not agree with me, probably? Stop and think of all such cases you ever heard of. You say this is a question of

sentiment; very good, stop and consider Sylvia Carrington as a man should consider the woman he loves."

Darrell moved slightly in his chair. He was very pale, but his gray eyes did not avoid the keen black ones.

"I appeal to you, because I know her," Mr. Carrington added, even kindly. "If she wants this, she will take it, cost her what it may later. There is no one who can save her from this folly, Darrell, except—yourself. It is—up to you."

The pause was not great in length, but concentrated within its space the intensity of hours.

"I have to thank you for much frankness and patience," Darrell at last said, his voice oddly subdued and level in tone. "You are right at every point. And I should be the more wrong in allowing Miss Carrington to make the sacrifice you represent, because I am not able to offer her the only possible return. To-day, her beauty dazzled my common-sense, and honor—that is not the sure foundation I could let her take for love."

The cigar fell from Mr. Carrington's fingers, he half arose as if to check the too-candid avowal. But before he could frame action, the alcove curtains divided and Sylvia Carrington walked across the floor, her small head held erect on its slender column, the rose-tinted sheen and glitter about her throwing into relief her absolute pallor. Every trace of excitement was held under control; she even lingered to gather up the pink scarf, before inclining her head to her father.

"You have my gratitude for the demonstration, sir," she steadily acknowledged.

And as she passed Darrell, who had risen, she spoke with the same composure:

"I was wrong to-day in questioning your statement, Mr. Darrell; you had indeed committed the unforgivable sin."

Darrell offered no defense or apology. Moving back, he silently opened the door and held it as she passed out of the library. The floating scarf caught on the latch, but tore free with a soft sound of parting silk, since she did not heed the tangle.

Mr. Carrington was dumb; being hu-



"Darrell," she requested, "will you observe the interior of the car you are driving instead of the road upon which you are driving it?"

man, his strong relief was sadly confounded with indignation at the outcome he had so much desired. But he recovered speech when Darrell slowly turned toward him.

"This has been a most unfortunate episode, Darrell. Your straight-forwardness has helped us all. I hope you will let me give some evidence of appreciation—"

He was again speaking to the chauffeur, but Darrell promptly hushed him.

"You will give me nothing, Mr. Carrington, now or at any other time. I love your daughter; I have loved her for months. You will permit me to wish you good-night and regret leaving you unexpectedly without a chauffeur."

"You—why—"

Darrell impatiently surveyed him, then made a gesture toward where the heap of rose-colored gauze had lain on the floor before the alcove.

"I saw the scarf," he gave brief ex-

planation. "Following its hint, I caught the gleam of Miss Carrington's gown behind the curtains. In all you said about her unhappy future I saw the truth; moreover, I know what you do not; the slightness of her contact with me and the ease with which she must forget to-day. I accepted the task you said was up to me, and lied for her to overhear. She is cured. But neither you nor circumstance can take from me the knowledge that she was willing to be my wife. I shall live on that for the rest of my life. I believe you and I have nothing more to say to each other?"

Mr. Carrington stood up.

"Why, no," he said. "I suppose not. Except that I should like to shake hands with you before you go."

They shook hands. As Darrell went out, he lingered at the door long enough to detach a fragment of iridescent gauze that still clung pendant to the latch.

III

It was in January that Miss Carrington had invited her chauffeur to luncheon at the Golden Arms. It was on the first of March that Roger Darrell received a communication from a legal firm, informing him that a certain Jane Darrell of Wisconsin, who declared herself the last of a distant branch of his family, had recently died and bequeathed to him the sum of fifty thousand dollars.

When Darrell read the letter, he laughed unmirthfully, then sat down in the little Yonkers garage where he was employed, and passed a bad hour. After which, he made ready and went to New York.

There was no mistake in the matter. Within a few days all formalities were fulfilled and the fortune placed in its new owner's bank account.

"Now," remarked the head of the law firm, on the occasion of the concluding interview, "now, Mr. Darrell, I presume you will commence to enjoy yourself. I should."

There was an interest too frank for curiosity in his manner and keen, pleasant face—an invitation to confidence. Not insensible, Darrell smiled, leaning thoughtfully on the arm of the office chair.

"I never have enjoyed myself," he admitted. "Except incidentally. My father was a clergyman, a genuine Puritan by descent and disposition—iron-handed, iron-willed, merciless in righteousness. In our small Maine village he was a power to be reckoned with. I learned early to reckon with him. My mother had been a gentle, gay, New York girl; forced into the New England mould, she lived, or existed, for twenty-one years of rigid, dutiful service in irreproachable poverty. She did, and brought me up to do, exactly what my father willed. Enjoyment was not part of the plan."

"She might enjoy this fortune with you," suggested the lawyer.

"She died last year. But I gave her the enjoyment." Darrell lifted his gaze to the other man's with a certain cold defiance not meant for the one he looked at. "She had five full years of it. When my

father died, I took command. I brought her to the New York she had not seen since her marriage. I got work as a chauffeur, and gave her more money to spend in a month than our austere life had allowed her in a year. Oh, yes, I understood the loss of social position, and I did not care. My training had not been to make money, and I had no time to learn. I told her I was in the automobile business. She had five years of pretty clothes, bright surroundings, theatres, books, and music. Cost for cost, I am content with my bargain."

"And now?"

"Now, I have a mess of pottage without my birthright, and no appetite. I have got to arrange a life."

"Is there nothing before out of reach, that your wealth might now make attainable?" The lawyer ventured an interrogation. "Nothing in the way of a wish you have had at heart?"

"Nothing," said Roger Darrell. "Droll, isn't it?"

IV

Sylvia Carrington and Roger Darrell did not meet again. No convergent circles of life brought them to a point of contact. He took a partner and went into active business in connection with the steel manufacturing industry. She spent much of her time abroad. At intervals she returned to brief residence in New York; once he passed several months in Europe for business reasons. But they never came together, at home or on the Continent.

Two years after their parting in Mr. Carrington's library, they next came face to face, on Fifth Avenue, eyes meeting eyes in one straight, unavoidable regard. Neither was alone. Darrell's face set as if in endurance of an anticipated blow; his gaze clung to hers tenaciously, not so much in longing as in a questioning suspense that stopped breath.

Miss Carrington met the challenge. Slowly, without either haste or reluctance, she inclined her beautiful head to him and passed on.

"But something has happened!" exclaimed the girl who accompanied Darrell. "You, you are troubled!"



Miss Carrington established herself in a chair within the recess

Darrell constrained himself to smile; he looked rather more than troubled.

"It is nothing," he denied. "At least, nothing new; something I lost long ago."

The society notes of the newspapers had announced Miss Carrington's impending departure for the Adirondacks. But nevertheless the weeks slipped by, and she still lingered in the city house. June glided into July, but there was no record of her going. Darrell knew it, because he, practical business man and indifferent ignorer of social affairs, daily read the journalistic accounts of the doings of the so-called smart set. The custom matched with his other invariable habit of lunching once every month at the Golden Arms. He always drove alone to the inn, left his own motor car where he had once left Mr. Carrington's, and chose the table in the bow-window. He had come to be a very busy man, but sometimes he passed half a day at that table, smoking—he had learned to smoke—and watching the chair opposite through the violet haze.

It was in early July that Darrell, reading his newspaper one morning, found himself confronted with the information that Mrs. Septimus Campbell-Brown had just given a dinner and box-party for her daughter Dorothy, whose engagement to Mr. Roger Darrell was rumored.

Dorothy Campbell-Brown was the débutante daughter of his partner and friend. Darrell stared at the paper, then frowned, then crammed it into his wastebasket and went out to lunch at the Golden Arms.

A warm, fragrant summer wind was blowing across the country-side, swaying the geraniums in the bow-window, fluttering the menu cards on the hotel table and stirring pleasantly the big, empty dining-room. His perfunctory luncheon ended, Darrell sat playing with his coffee-cup and smoking, as usual. Engaged with his own thoughts, he did not raise his bent head when the soft sound of trailing garments came down the room, until the movement stopped opposite him. Then he looked up and saw Sylvia Carrington standing there, a slim, self-assured figure.

"Having seen the announcement in

this morning's paper, Mr. Darrell, I could not pass without offering my congratulations," she explained, in her clear, level voice. "I have met Miss Campbell-Brown, who is altogether charming. My sister and I are on our way to the Adirondacks, so there will be no other opportunity."

Her wide, haughty, too-brilliant eyes had betrayed her. The conviction that gripped Darrell was like the closing of a hand upon his heart. Not answering her speech at all, he rose and drew back the chair opposite.

"Sit down there," he required, quite unaware of the master's note in his accent. "No—I cannot have you either go or stand there; sit down. I must speak with you."

The scarlet flashed into her delicate face, her red mouth bent dangerously, but she took the seat.

"There is nothing," she frigidly stated, "that we can have to say to each other."

"I beg pardon for contradiction. For more than two years I have had everything to say to you."

"There has been no time during those years when you could not have said it. It is too late, Mr. Darrell; you distinctly told your lawyer that you had no wish at heart to which wealth or your own social position would bring you nearer."

"I told my lawyer?" Darrell echoed, his astounded gaze on her. "*You* know that! You know what passed between us; you—"

The mischief was done. Her changing expression confirmed what his shock of meeting mind and memory divined. As the color receded even from his lips, she turned aside her head and sat passive in her chair.

"I have been very dull," he presently said, gravely and humbly. "I might have remembered who alone ever found interest in me, and so have guessed who stood behind the puppet mask of a fictitious kinswoman. It was you, all the time—you. And I have thought you must hate me!"

She stirred, suddenly her heavy lashes went up, and her eyes blazed their naked passion and bitter anger into his.



"Was I less the chauffeur, rich than poor?"

"I—yes! Take that guarded knowledge from me, Mr. Darrell; you have already taken all else. Hate you? That night when you told my father you did not care to marry me, I listened a second time. Oh, yes—I told you that you had committed the unforgivable sin but after I left the room I stayed beyond the door to listen again, because I could not believe what I had heard. I listened while you said to him that you had lied for my good, knowing I was in the alcove, but you would love me always."

"I have! I will; Sylvia—"

"You have not. I shall never see you after to-day. But I believed you, then. The passing from me of that shame and horror left me so shaken that when you turned to leave the library, I could just reach the shelter of the next curtained doorway. You passed so close to me that I buried my face in my scarf so you might not hear me catch my breath. I knew you meant never to come to me as the chauffeur, and I meant you should not stay away. Next day I went to my dear friend

and kinsman, the Mr. Hamilton who was your lawyer, and with him planned a way to divide my own fortune with you. Then I waited for you. You never came."

White with a passion twin to hers, he flung out his hand in a vehement gesture.

"Came to you? What, *I*, self-convicted before you of that fault, *I* venture to come back and ask you to credit a tale of theatric heroism and re-give me the love I had insulted and denied? And—was I less the chauffeur rich than poor?"

"Chauffeur you never were. You thought of *your* pride—when did you think of *mine*?"

She rose, clasping her two small hands on the back of the chair. "Mr. Darrell, when I said that you were guilty of the unforgivable sin, I spoke the truth. Only, that sin was not your kiss, but your arrogant falsehood to me. How dared you throw into the smooth working of God's destiny for us the shattering mischief of a lie? There is but one fault beyond pardon, and that is deceit in the face of love, for *any* purpose."

He had risen with her, and heard the arraignment standing. At the last word he made a step toward her.

"You are right," he confessed. "Yet, you forgave me, Sylvia."

Something rushed across the lustrous surface of her large eyes.

"Because for a woman there is nothing unforgivable; we are so weak. But I made my last concession last month, when we met on the street and I bowed to you."

"And killed the last hope in me," he retorted swiftly. "If you had cut me, I could have thought you remembered at least enough for resentment. Only indifference could nod and pass on. I was wrong, but I loved you. I always shall."

Their two pairs of resolute, passionate eyes met, and each held the other's gaze.

"You are a gentleman; of course you would say that after my admission," Sylvia Carrington steadily returned. "You loved me two years ago; you do not now. Or if you do, it is our mutual mis-

fortune that you cannot prove it to me. I will not marry you, Roger Darrell, ever. Carry out your engagement to Miss Campbell-Brown; this is the absolute end of our episode."

As she would have drawn back, he moved before her, his face locked in a determination dwarfing her own.

"Wait! Not twice, Sylvia. For Miss Campbell-Brown is secretly engaged to the penniless young chief of our designing department—eighteen betrothed to twenty-one—perhaps you can guess why I have tried to help them. Now, you will admit that I have not left your sight since you entered, that I could have had no idea of meeting you here to-day or preparing for this?"

"No—I—"

He opened his shirt with a fine frankness that would better have accorded with velvet and ruffled lace than with twentieth century linen, and drew forth a small, gold locket, ruthlessly breaking the slender chain that had supported it. Snapping the case open, he showed, not a portrait or flower, but a ragged fragment of rose-colored gauze to which still clung two or three iridescent metal spangles.

"I untangled it from the latch of the door through which you passed out of my sight that night," he told her. "Punish me for my real sins, if you will, but not for lack of loyalty to you."

The girl caught her breath, panting; suddenly she snatched the locket from his open palm and flung it across the room.

"How could you?" she cried fiercely. "Roger, how could you wear *that*? If I had not dropped the scarf where you saw it, I would have been your wife these two years!"

His answer was the movement that swept them together. Her eyes drooping beneath his, Darrell stooped to set his second kiss on the radiant beauty of the face against his shoulder—reckless of time or situation, and content.

The Orchids

BY
EDWIN BALMER

Author of "Via Wireless," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. C. WALL



Marion

THEN you told him to risk it?"

"I said I'd protect him if he came; that's all. I told Ruf it was entirely his own affair whether he cared to come back."

"When he's counting on your getting him out of the trouble again? His affair, when—like last time—you've got to stand between him and this town, if anything happens!"

"Well?" the man replied, slowly. His tanned face reddened with his pleasure at his companion's anger for him, and he smiled at her in conciliation. "What should I have said to him, Marion?"

The girl crumpled the straw crown of her hat between her hands; she opened her lips impulsively, but shifted her eyes swiftly away from him and looked down the road without replying.

It was just before sunset on a Sunday, late in June—and a Sunday stifling and scorching hot even for that little prairie town of southern Illinois in mid-summer. About the porch, where the man and the girl were waiting, the morning-

glory and wild cucumber vines, which had sprung up only the month before, hung shrunk and withered on their strings. In the garden below, as in the little gardens below the verandas of the other houses facing the road, colorless gray ghosts of geraniums and fuchsias parched on specter stalks; the earlier green of the shade trees was brown and yellow from the dust, which toned also the blistered colors of the houses to gritty tints of gray and tan. And beyond the borders of the town, the prairie spread to the horizon a smoothed expanse of burnt powder. Over it, toward the northwest, the rusty rails of a single-track road dwindled to a point at the prairie-rim. A generation before, when that branch was brought down from the main-line at Hubbarton, eighteen miles away, and had started Prion's boom, those rails were to bring to Prion the Dutch- and English-American settlers from New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, who then were still pushing west to work the prairie land; but instead,

by some fate which no one ever understood, the negroes, straggling up from the South, cast themselves upon the little town. So, as the people of Prion saw the settlers of their own sort passing by to build up other places, and the negro stragglers staying, they grew reckless to "redeem" their town. Therefore, for fifteen years—during which that branch railroad had rushed in the State troops on special trains three times to restore order—they had been "redeeming" Prion, till they had made the town notorious through the State, and till, progressing from settling their race differences by mob right, they began taking up quarrels between themselves in the same way. Of these, the trouble between Ruf Westing and his wife's brothers, the Perleys, had been for some time the most serious.

How it had actually started—that it had grown from an old personal grudge between Ruf and Sam Perley—no one now seemed to know or care; for the Perleys had been careful to turn their grievance against Ruf into a town attitude years before. They had brought up the big boys and young men, just beginning to loaf about the bar-rooms, to look upon Ruf as next to the same as a "bad nigger," and it even had been suggested to them that he had a streak of nigger blood in him. Therefore, if he offended, he was to be beaten up the same as a nigger, and run out of town if he resisted.

And Ruf both offended and resisted. Twice, the ensuing treatment, under the hands of the gang that Perley collected, had stopped just short of murder; the third time, when Ruf shot Sam Perley, Nat Yorke, the sheriff, had got Ruf safe out of town only at the risk of his own life. The local court, when Yorke arraigned the men in the mob before it, acquitted them all, as it had always acquitted them and as it always would; so Sam Perley—recovered—was around boasting it would be Ruf's finish this time if he came back to trouble the town, and no one knew better than the sheriff that, if Ruf returned, the Perleys could count again on the same supporting element in the inevitable clash.

Yet, when Ruf demanded if the sher-

iff would endeavor to protect him if he came home, how else could Nathan have answered him?

The girl, crushing the crown of the new hat between her nervous fingers as she gazed away toward the prairie, still remained silent. When she had given her consent to Nathan's running for sheriff six months before, she had agreed to accept such situations as this. As long as four years ago, when she had just finished her first year at the State University, and Nathan had just been graduated, and she promised herself to him, she had been proud that he was not going to desert Prion, as so many other men of his kind had done, but that he was to return to the little town to rise or sink with it. And when she had come to realize, with him, that it was no longer a mere matter of State University morality for some one to stand for the law in Prion, but that it had become a plain, business necessity if he was to keep the values of the Prion properties his father had left him, and she likewise was to preserve her interests, then she had conceded to him that if no one else should try to keep decency in the town, he must. But since then, she had seen him fight almost alone against half the place in another man's quarrel. And now that he was to risk himself again—

But, she told herself, she was not opposing the duty she had accepted; she was rebelling chiefly at the terrible untimeliness of its demand—an untimeliness which Nathan himself admitted.

"I wouldn't have risked any trouble now, if I could have helped it. You know that," he said, breaking the silence at last. "In fact, Marion," he confessed then, half-pleased with her, in extenuation, "I did try to dodge it. I didn't go to Hubbarton for two weeks after I heard Ruf was there and talking about coming back; but—"

He caught himself up. It was just what he meant to avoid suggesting to her; for he had gone on Saturday to Hubbarton on an errand for her, to procure orchids for her bride's bouquet on Monday.

"But I sent you into it—for my flowers!" the girl cried.

"But I've been seeing this morning it was a good thing he ran into me," the man corrected. "Just getting him out of town last time, was side-stepping; that was all. I've known since then—I've told you—that some time, pretty soon, we'd have to have it out—here. So if it comes before to-morrow night, we can go away just that much freer, that's all. And if I've got to go against them for anyone, I'd rather it'd be Ruf than a nigger. He's far from a saint, but they've hounded the life out of him. The Perleys are saying that the way Ruf treated Jane is what's killing her. Well; you told me yourself she wants him back; and Ruf says she'd come to him if she were well and her brothers would let her. So if he wants to take the chances of coming back here—well—we might as well sell out now and get out ourselves if the Perleys can stop him."

He jerked himself to his feet—a tall, lithe figure, with his clear, tanned skin in good contrast to the blue of his serge. He was not handsome; just young and well-looking and with a good bearing; but as the girl's eyes turned up to his as he looked down at her, a hot flush of pride for him flooded over her—the stronger because it burnt at the bottom with a sudden, fierce resentment against him for again swinging her contrary to her will. So she lowered her eyes and turned away abruptly, without noticing the hand he held to help her up, and gazed out over the railroad tracks receding to the North.

Away at the very rim of the plain a puff of smoke was shooting skyward; under it, a train was beginning to rise into view—the evening local from Hub-barton, which Ruf had said he was going to take.

The girl remained sitting on the steps watching it silently; then she arose and closed her hand over her lover's fingers.

"You are going down to meet him at the train?" she asked. They could see that loiterers were hurrying from all sides in the direction of the station.

The sheriff laughed lightly. "I said you were taking this altogether too seriously, dearie," he replied. He turned his

wrist so that he caught her hand within his own, and stood holding it. "You don't think that Sam Perley's going to start anything till it is safe for himself, do you? He's got to get something he can stir up his crowd with. That'll take time, even for Perley. I'd better not seem to be expecting it."

He turned away; but the girl remained at the top of the steps till the train stopped, and waited till the crowd returned past the Court-house from the station. They all crossed the square toward the Westing cottage. Marion could see Ruf at last, as he went into the house and the others fell back. When she saw that the man entered his home alone, she relaxed a little; but she did not move away. She reseated herself on the steps and, with Nathan still beside her, obstinately remained, observing the little house long after even the loafers who had accompanied Ruf from the station had sauntered away. And at last she was rewarded.

A man—Sam Perley—seemed suddenly flung from Ruf's door. Picking himself up, he ran shouting and gesticulating across the square.

The first men he encountered merely called out to others uncertainly; but in a moment Perley had gathered four or five about him. The little group swept back toward his sister's house. A shot sounded clearly, the smoke of it floating from Ruf's window. The men scattered, with heads lowered, scooting for shelter in every direction; but the crack of the gun was bringing out a score of other men and boys. Perley, recovering himself, ran to meet them, and spread them about so that they surrounded his sister's cottage.

It had all happened so swiftly that Marion, though she was conscious that Nathan had left her as soon as Perley appeared, saw that only now had the sheriff reached the square. He flung himself upon Perley and disarmed him; but the next moment Perley had help. He threw the sheriff off, recovered his revolver and turning, defiantly fired a shot through Ruf's door. Some one fired another; a third shot came from Ruf's window. The man beside Perley fell.



A man seemed suddenly flung from Ruf's door

For one terrible instant, as everyone else in sight scuttled again to cover, Nathan stood alone in the glare of the square; next, he, too, crouched and ran—not away—but toward Ruf's house. At the side of the cottage, just out of range of the window, he straightened; for a few seconds he appeared to be parleying with the man within; then he was running again, calling, toward the houses where Perley's men were hidden. They answered him with shots against the walls behind which Ruf was watching and now and then returning their

fire, coolly, and with careful aim.

Nathan disappeared. The shooting suddenly ceased in one of the houses. Men began to run from it, and, in the pause, the sheriff suddenly reappeared. He was standing upon the jail steps at the south end of the square with five other men, armed, like himself, with rifles. The town, surprised, stared, but neither Nathan nor any of his five moved; and before the town returned its attention to Westings', Ruf was half-way across the square. A shot or two followed him; but the man ran on straight toward the sheriff and his deputies on the jail steps. Between them and into the jail Ruf ran; and the jail doors swung shut before the town gathered itself and crushed into the square after him.

Marion gained the facts as well as she could from those who clamored for them among the crowd in the square. Sam Perley, it appeared, had been waiting for Ruf at his sister's bedside. Ruf started the quarrel—the crowd, of course, had only Sam's version—and, when Jane

tried to interfere, he struck her senseless. Then Ruf had shot Dan Healy from his window; he had wounded old man Morgan, and one of the Coopers, as well.

The girl ran to the telegraph office in the station. The agent there, an old man, had remained at his key.

He told her that the mayor had already telegraphed the capitol. No one, apparently, had thought to cut the wires as yet. She tore off a blank and, addressing the Governor, wrote steadily for some moments:

The mayor has telegraphed you that riot has broken out again in Prion, and the mob in possession of the town is threatening the jail where the sheriff, with five deputies, is protecting the prisoner. This is all that the mayor or any other person in Prion will dare do to assist the sheriff. Three citizens have been shot already, one seriously, and there is no chance for the sheriff to get other deputies here, or for him to hold the five he has when the real trouble comes. They have always failed before and refused to shoot their friends to protect the prisoner, and they will this time; but this sheriff will not surrender. His life is at stake as much as his prisoner's. You can not send help here too soon to save him.

The big station clock stared down the hour at her. It was half-past six. She knew that, even though the Governor ordered the militia to Prion by special train at once, it must be nine o'clock before they could arrive—more than two hours! It would be sunset—dark—an hour before that. And already, as she turned toward the square, men were breaking down the doors of the saloons and raiding the bars. They would wait a little while, she knew, even after they learned that the Governor had been warned; for they would first make a demonstration to give the sheriff's deputies time to desert. They would not go against those extra five rifles if there was any chance of their shooting. Yet it could be all over and done before the troops could arrive—unless some one something, could check these men. And from where could she get help in time?

She went from man to man, boldly, appealingly, despairingly. "Think we'll shoot our friends for Ruf Westing?" "We won't be shot for Ruf!" "Nat'll never save him! Tell him to give him up!" These were the less brutal answers.

After half-an-hour, convinced hopelessly of what she had known before—that there would be no help for Nathan in Prion—she stumbled to the edge of the square, dizzy and choking from the dust kicked up by the mob.

Suddenly a smaller, separate center of commotion appeared, rolling toward the square from the direction of the tele-

graph office. She ran to meet it. It was the telegraph agent, who, when he saw Marion, came quickly toward her and handed her a telegram addressed to her. It was from Nathan's friend, Stevens, in Hubbarton, and read:

Prentiss gives me ten for you.
Bringing them with me by motor.

It was the telegram Stevens was to send her if he could find enough orchids in Hubbarton for her bride's bouquet. It was to procure these flowers, which Stevens was bringing with him in his motor-car, that Nathan had gone to Hubbarton the day before. It was from these ten orchids, for her, that all this had come upon Nathan.

Realization of this smote her as a blow. She passed the back of her hand across the eyes. The men were spinning about her; she choked again in the dust. She lost consciousness.

II

She came to herself in a strange room—they had carried her into the Brents' parlor, overlooking the square. It was dusk in the room; the clock on the mantel struck once for the half-hour—half-past seven. But before she could ask the question, or pull herself up to see, the noise coming in through the shut windows told her that Nathan was still safe.

The square was filled now; the mob had closed completely about the jail. It was armed, and as ugly as any that had broken into that jail before and taken the prisoner out. But something, Marion recognized at once, had restrained it; there had been no attack yet.

Mrs. Brent, tending her, confirmed it.

"Why?"

"The men coming from Hubbarton to help Nathan, dearie; I thought they told you before you fainted," the woman replied.

"Men coming from Hubbarton to help Nathan?" Marion repeated.

"Yes; Hubbarton is sending help to Nathan! They can't tell here when they left, so they don't know when they're coming. They've been looking for them any minute this half-hour!"

"Hubbarton is sending help?" Marion iterated again. As the news penetrated her consciousness, she calculated that her telegram to the Governor must have been taken at Hubbarton before being sent on to the capitol. Of course, therefore, the report of the situation in Prion must have spread through the larger town. But never before, when there had been trouble in Prion, had Hubbarton or any other place offered aid. But now Hubbarton was sending help to the sheriff; it was the knowledge of this that had held Nathan's deputies beside him; it was the suspense due to this which had put off, from moment to moment, the attack upon the jail!

The woman explained slowly to the girl, who stared back at her as though unable to believe.

"You will remember in a minute, dearie," she said. "The telegram came from Hubbarton just before you fainted. Mayor Prentiss, of Hubbarton, is sending men in automobiles."

"Mayor Prentiss sending men in automobiles?" the girl echoed.

"Yes; Jack Stevens—Nathan's friend in Hubbarton, with the automobiles, you know, Marion," the woman continued. "He is bringing them; he is the one that telegraphed, they say. And they said they told you; it wasn't till then you fainted."

"That?" Marion gasped. "That—?" In her struggle to understand, to question, to explain, things whirled about her again. But something told her now that she must keep steady; that the end of it all depended upon her; she might be able to do something. What, she did not know. First, she must understand; so she questioned her friend coolly, carefully. Then it was very clear.

The only word that had come from the outside before the wires were cut was Stevens' telegram to her, telling her he had got her ten orchids from Prentiss—Prentiss grew them for a fad. The agent receiving it, the men who went to the station to cut the wires, everyone, had taken it to mean that Stevens was bringing men in his big motor-car. Prentiss was mayor of Hubbarton. So the town's misunderstanding of it was natural, inevitable. And, more than that,

Nathan must have taken it the same way, too; for the version of the telegram which was passed about would inevitably have reached the men in the jail, and Nathan would never suspect the mistake. The town was looking for men from Hubbarton; Nathan must be building upon them; and Stevens was bringing to them—not men, but orchids, *her* orchids, orchids for her bride's bouquet to-morrow.

The blood burned hot under her skin; it gave her strength to stand and move again to know that they—that is, she, somehow, she—had held the town from the attack thus long; that she had gained Nathan a little more time while the soldiers that she had summoned must surely, by now, be on the way; and that they could hold the mob in suspense, maybe, a little longer.

Only she must let Nathan know; she must not deceive him to his death.

She broke away from Mrs. Brent, and finding the room where the telephone stood, she locked herself in. Taking the telephone, she tried to call Nathan at the jail. When they told her that the wire to the jail had been cut, she forced herself, resolutely, to the front door. Then suddenly, as she racked herself to evoke some way whereby she might get word through that mob and to the jail, the question came to her: Was it best to give even Nathan the truth? Would she help him by sending him the fact? Might it not be safest to keep him deceived with the others? He was caught, committed to fight to the end whether he were to have aid or not; she knew that; so what harm could result from leaving him this hope? Then she knew that, instead of harm, it was the only further help she could now give him—to keep him counting upon that false help from Hubbarton. His only chance lay in keeping his deputies confident of the coming relief; sure of that, himself, he could hold them longer; and the longer he could manage to hold them, the longer might he hold off the town. But could he hold them long enough?

She looked at the sun. The last segment of its red rim was slipping down



The agent handed her a telegram

behind the prairie edge; it was almost dark. If the troops were coming, as they came to Prion the last time, the headlight of their special train would appear just where the sun had vanished, in not much longer than an hour. But long before then—almost any minute, now—Stevens' car must arrive from Hubbarton; then the town would uncover the trick it had itself put into her hands; Nathan's deputies would desert all the more quickly for having been fooled; and Nathan would be left to face the mob—alone.

By road it was less than twenty miles to Hubbarton—little further than by rail; so, if Stevens had left before his telegram was received at Prion, and if he were running his big car as he was famous for running it, he must be, even now, almost in sight.

About her Marion heard men remind

one another that half-way between Hubbarton and Prion, the farmers had been ploughing and repairing the road. Stevens' car might be delayed indefinitely. He might even make a detour to avoid the bad road; so, for some time yet, the suspense must hold in Prion.

III

Night was settling over the prairie; on all sides the dark was slipping down. Thirty minutes had passed; the soldiers must be thirty minutes nearer. Now, however, the men around the jail seemed to think of the troops, for they began calling to each other that, whether the men came from Hubbarton or not, they must have their work done before the soldiers arrived.

Some one proceeded to smash the electric lamps about the square, as the power

came on; others, bawling out a new threat, built a fire in the center. As it flamed up, the white faces showed strange and monstrous, in the intermittent flare and shadow. A few of the mob still seemed merely drunk; others might be but frenzied with excitement; but still others, as they swayed, showed faces stripped brute-bare—cruel, savage.

Sam Perley, with one of the Healeys bearing aloft his brother's shirt with a red hole in it, spurred on one flank of the rioters; Jack Cooper, waving an arm, bound and bloody, goaded another. Then, suddenly, a dozen men marching in double file and bearing something between them, stood out in the light of the flames. They brandished their burden higher amid a shout of approval. It was the trunk of a tree stripped of its branches so it might be carried and hurled as a ram.

A sharp, short flash from one side, and a revolver shot rang out; another—more. Then the shots ceased. There were cries and a parley. Shots again; and as a second time they ceased, there followed a vague, blurred movement of men from the jail. Marion realized that the sheriff's deputies had left him at last. Nathan was now behind those doors alone. Another parley; then they raised their ram and running with it into the jail-yard and up the steps, dashed the tree-trunk against the door. Tumbling back they fled.

Still the sheriff gave no sign.

Revolvers flashed again and the bullets thumped against walls and smashed through windows to cover those now creeping forward to drag the ram away, but for all the sign he gave, the man behind the splintered door might have been dead. Yet, somehow, Marion knew—as she realized the mob also knew—that he was not down; that he was not cowed or even at a loss as yet; that he was merely waiting—coolly, with a purpose—waiting.

And so he let them drag back their ram unhindered; let their bullets beat against the jail walls unanswered; let them lift and run the log again and crack the door before they dropped it once more and scurried from him.

Still waiting, now he was permitting them to do it all over again; permitting the crowd to close in bolder all about; permitting their log to crash through the door and—still waiting.

Marion swung about and, sweeping the gathering darkness beyond the town in the opposite direction—in the direction Nathan must be watching over the heads of the mob in the square—she saw a light glaring from far away on the Hubbarton road; then she saw it was not one light, but three—the bright gas headlight of a powerful automobile, with smaller lights flanking it—the lights of Stevens' car.

So Nathan had seen those lights, and that was why he had waited. That was why he had permitted the mob to render him defenseless the while he waited for relief from Stevens with—her orchids!

Suddenly, close beside her appeared Webster, a friend of Nathan's and one of the deputies who had been with the sheriff in the jail. He recognized her and stopped.

"Nat's not hurt; you mustn't be afraid," he said. "He's lying where they can't hit him and just waiting for the Hubbarton men," he explained. "He saw the car coming when the men began to bolt him. I was going to stick; but he sent me to get word to the Hubbarton men. He wants them to come around from behind and occupy the Court-house windows, and command the square; then—"

He recounted Nathan's plan to her swiftly in a whisper; and was gone before she could make him comprehend that she was not merely hysterical or beside herself. So, knowing now that she must herself reach Nathan at any risk, she set herself to fight her way, desperately, forward through the throng.

That it was already too late for Nathan to save himself, made no difference. She would take any risk, do anything, merely to see him strike once for himself; shoot down one of these beast-men as they hurled themselves upon him; kill one, at least, before they could kill him. For he was still waiting. The door, the only barrier between them and him, was shattered and hanging from its

frame; the next attack must carry the men through; even now, they were gathering for the last rush and retreat, gibbering and cackling. Still Nathan made no move, gave no sign—still he waited, as Webster had told her he planned to wait, and would wait now for the flash of lights in the Court-house. And she could not get to him! But—as the mob, compact and convulsive, began to move after those who were lifting the log again and poising it for a last rush—was there not another way to tell him and make him fight and strike at least once for himself, before they crushed in upon him?

As suddenly as the thought had come upon her, it commanded her; and, ceasing her struggles forward, she fought her way to one side and ran up the Court-house steps.

Nathan—as the man sent to meet Stevens had told Marion—was crouching at an upper window of the jail, watching the approaching lights of the coming car. He had held to his plan too long and risked too much not to stick to it a little longer just when, in another moment, he might be enabled to carry it through. He had fixed upon it two hours before—as soon as he had seen the first wavering in the square over the news from the telegraph office and had learned that the cause of it was that Hubbarton was sending help. And then—two hours ago—he was more in suspense and more distrustful of his chance of carrying it through than now. For, since then, nothing unfavorable had happened, which he had not counted upon—the stirring of the rest of the town against him, as the news spread of Ruf's shooting Dan Healy and the two others; the consequent failure of anyone to come to his aid for the defense of Ruf; the final desertion of his deputies. And almost everything that he had hoped for had happened—the continuance of the wavering and uncertainty, the long delay before the real attack upon the jail, and his ability to hold his deputies till then, and now, finally, the appearance of the car from Hubbarton.

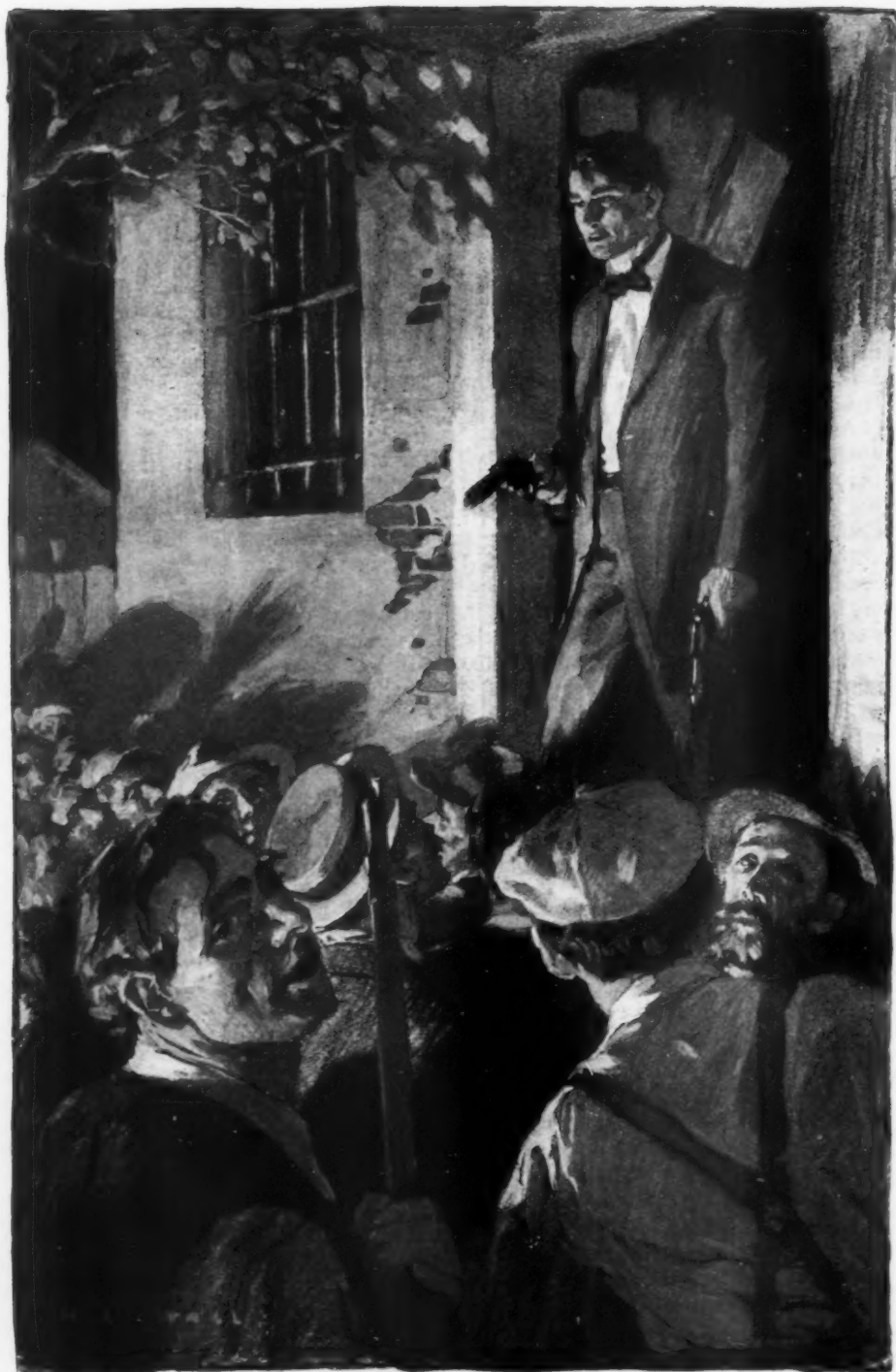
Till the car came into sight—unmistakable to anyone in that section of the

country by the arrangement of its three lights on the front—Nathan had not admitted to himself his lack of faith. Never before had citizens from another town come to aid a man caught as he was; it was unprecedented. So the appearance of their lights, speeding each second, faster and faster toward him, thrilled him with a sudden, triumphant revulsion; with a reckless exaltation. Of all in his town who, when they elected him sheriff, had boasted and pledged themselves to stand by him if at any time he should be compelled to fight for the safety and good name of Prion, half might turn against him again at this fresh re-arousing of their passions, and the other half—all but one girl—might stand by, afraid to raise a finger for him.

But from Hubbarton, men who could barely know him, had come to help him; they had come voluntarily to save him! He could see that their lights had stopped at the point where he had told Webster to meet them. In a moment now, the flash from the Court-house windows would give him to know—and give the town to know—that their rifles were there at his command. Then, without another man being hurt, without another shot being fired, he would clear the square; he could then pack all those cackling men home and show the silent ones how, if only ten of them dared to stand for law and order after that, they could save Prion; and—he let himself think just once again of her—he could go away with Marion to-morrow, after all.

But the men about the fire in the center of the square had already begun to move. Their leaders, lifting their tree-trunk between them, again had cleared the edge of the crowd and as they pressed on, this time the mob came after them. Half pulled along by the leaders, and half pushing them on, the whole mass in the square swept forward. Moving thus together, they advanced more slowly than before; but, as the crush behind kept pace with the leaders, the sheriff knew that this meant there would be no falter and flight at the door. This time they must come through.

He knew, too, as he swept the Court-



"I thought I would have to shoot some of you"

house windows with his eyes and saw them all still black, that he must shoot, now. As the men in front were forced in by the mass pressing behind, he must shoot down the first and the second, if they had not by then shot him, and a third, if he could. He must kill—kill—kill as many of them as he might; and to no purpose. For whether he shot down a dozen or none before they shot him, they must sweep over him just the same.

He raised himself on one knee, as they reached the jail steps, and pointing his two revolvers, waited for the first heads to come even with his sights. But suddenly, without at first seeing that for which he had been waiting and watching during the desperate moments before, he was aware that something had surprised the men moving upon him; and instead of the heads again rising as black silhouette-targets before the red flare of the fire, a yellow electric blare from one side flashed into their faces and was gone again as suddenly—the flash from the upper windows of the Court-house in which Nathan had sent word for the Hubbarton men to place themselves with their rifles commanding the square. And before the heads, which had turned in surprise to the Court-house windows, could turn back, the sheriff was upon his feet and through the jail door and standing straight and exposed in the light of the fire. And at this second surprise, the men in front who had not yet begun to move again, stood an instant more at the foot of the steps. As they halted, the murmur from those in the rear that the Hubbarton car had come, leaped to those in front; and, as it reached them, it sent their eyes again to those flanking windows in the Court-house from which the light had flashed out the moment before and which were dark now and silent—except for one window, which, as they listened, creaked as it was thrown up, and the tinkle of glass on the stone steps below as the panes of another were pushed out.

The sheriff stepped a little further forward; and, as the mob turned to him once more, he spoke calmly, clearly.

"I didn't think they'd get here in time," he said. It was almost like a con-

fession. "I thought I would have to shoot some of you. But they got here after all—in time to save your lives! For, of course, I won't have to shoot any of you now," he continued, simply and directly. "You can all go safely home instead."

The leaders of the mob, who had halted the moment before, still stood uncertain. But the sheriff did not waver. He was silent for a moment, as though he were waiting for them to understand. And, in the surprise, the mob too, stood silent. Only from the deep shadows in the Court-house windows which commanded the square, and from which the light had flashed the moment before, was there any sound. Another window was flung up and another; a third, which seemed to stick, was violently smashed.

That window squarely flanked the leaders of the mob less than twenty yards away.

The sheriff turned toward it quietly, confidently, and opened his lips to call. The men at the foot of the jail steps began to draw back a little.

The sheriff shut his lips and turning again to the mob, spoke to it.

"Go home—that's right," he repeated, almost indulgently now. "Go home. You, Perley; and you—and you—" He named a half-dozen others of the leaders. "You can stay, if you want; perhaps you'd better; it would save trouble fetching you back here later. But the rest of you had better go along now," he repeated.

They had slunk back another yard; a few steps more; for an instant they stopped; they glanced again toward the Court-house as some sound caught them; again they stepped back, stopped, but hung together only a moment more. Suddenly Nathan was aware that an engine headlight had sprung into view; and he was alone in front of the jail.

He stood there uncertainly till the militia came pouring up from the station. Then he turned toward the Court-house.

In the upper room, below the broken window, he found Marion on the floor.

A man—his friend, Stevens—came in upon them there. He had left Hubbarton before the trouble started. He had with him the orchids he had promised.

In The Laboratory

BY H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON

Author of "Jackal," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. W. AMICK

I HAVE decided that I ought to put on record all that I know concerning the death of Edward Haviland, and of the events that led up to it. This I shall do without comment or any attempt at an explanation which I know myself incapable of giving, and with only just such facts and circumstances as I was able to observe and note at the time. As for the solution—well, anyone in possession of this statement will be in as serviceable a position to attempt it as I.

Haviland, who has left a name of sound importance in scientific research, never really reached his inheritance. There was more in his work than appeared, more than he made public. He was a distinguished mathematician, and it was for his services in mathematics that he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. Naturally he looked out upon the world through a mathematician's eyes. He approached all science with a mathematical bias. He used to defend the system of rendering the problems of Political Economy by algebraic methods by which a celebrated philosopher embarrassed the schools. He lived, I always believed, as much among figures as among warm, human things, detached from life by his main absorbing interest. When he was withdrawn into his study he passed, as it were, out of reckoning; he became merely one of the signs and symbols amid which he lived and labored.

His natural disposition was kind and sympathetic. For his friends he had always a welcome which was, by his type of mind, rendered rather aloofly spiritual. He was full of charity, and

his purse was at any man's disposal for a generous object. He had been left in good circumstances by his father, a wealthy banker, and he had no need to rub shoulders with the sordid sides of life. I am sketching Haviland succinctly, that he may keep his relation to my story. I have to add, now, that at the age of forty he astonished all his friends and acquaintances by falling in love and getting engaged.

There is no other way of putting it than simply that way, yet I will confess that the phrase seems to apply to him only in a remote and occult and ghostly fashion. The girl, a Miss Westermmain, was some thirty years of age, and was an admirer of his work, at least of his reputation. She was a plain, wholesome woman of rather liberal views, which were neatly held under the restraint of a modern conventional manner. There was something attractive about her, though she had no claim to beauty, and I think it was mainly a quiet womanliness that shone through and rendered her sex for us. I had met her once or twice when Haviland's engagement was announced, and I had liked her. I saw a little more of her after their engagement, and my liking increased. Though, in common with many who knew him, I doubted Haviland's qualifications as a husband, I felt that if anyone were a proper mate for him it was Marion Westermmain. His engagement did not interfere with Haviland's arrangement of his life. He told me shyly that Miss Westermmain did not wish it to, and she herself broached the subject to me in the same sense.

It was in Haviland's rooms that she spoke to me; Haviland was showing

Lady Hope, her aunt, over his laboratory, which must have been an inordinate sacrifice for him, and I fancy Miss Westerman had engineered the opportunity to get me alone.

"I'm afraid Edward's friends are fearing I will hamper his career," she said, after preliminary approaches. "But I want you to get rid of that idea. I am anxious to help him, not to hinder him."

I told her frankly that if she could humanize him more, all his friends would rejoice.

She seemed surprised, and I thought she was a little displeased, for she said, after a pause and with some coldness, "I should be the very last to desire him to give up his work."

"He is not likely to do that," I told her. "If you can hold him back from making too great demands on himself it will be a service to him."

I think she liked it better put in that manner. "I shall hope to look after him and to serve him in all ways," she said warmly.

"I am sure of that," I replied; and I was.

I was right in supposing that nothing could derail Haviland from his appointed course, not even marriage. For several years previously he had been at work in a certain field which had engrossed him more than ever. It concerned organic life, and its relations to mathematics. He had been drawn to it by his astronomical studies, finding the highest mathematics the touchstone of stellar and cosmical problems.

"You remember the old theory," he said to me once as he lay back in his arm-chair and looked at the ceiling in abstraction. "The ancients founded their explanations of the universe on various elements. One was fire; another was water. A third was numbers." He paused, and then continued, speaking in his curiously level voice. "Perhaps there's something to be said for the idea. Numbers! Have you ever considered the mysticism of figures in relation to the problems they solve? We think we endow them with life and significance, but it may be these are inherent in them. They puzzle

and baffle us, even when we use them. They are our masters. After all, what control have we of them? They are arbitrary, supreme. We have to deal with them with suppositions, with suggestions, with postulates and hypotheses. Think of geometrical imaginaries! And that is only one instance. A score, a gross, rise to the mind. When you get back to the essence of things, how can there exist quantities less than none, and what is an infinite power? If I could get on the track of that—

"The longer I live, Ellery, the deeper grows my conviction that we are only at the beginning of accomplishment as far as mathematics are concerned, that we have hardly yet touched the fringe of a vast, unexplored subject." He was silent for a moment and then added, "I hope to do something. I hope to learn something. I am moving now in provinces of which I had no idea, once. They suggest other things—things far off. That is a field of research as yet untouched. Suppose, Ellery, that figures were, the real and only absolutes, the things-in-themselves of Plato!"

"I can't suppose anything of the sort," I said. "Figures are merely the convenient vehicles in which we summarize knowledge."

"Yes," he assented, softly. "That is what we hold them to be, but there is an infinite field—I wonder."

When I rose to go, a little later, he did not hear me, I think; he was gazing abstractedly at the fire. I spoke to him again, and he started.

"That you, Ellery?" he said. "I thought I saw— Did you ever feel that you had got near to a solution of the universe—to the key? I mean, did you ever think it was just that little way off which you could compass presently—in a little, in a flash perhaps, but almost certainly?"

"No," said I bluntly, looking on him with curiosity.

"I have," he said dreamily. "There are combinations— Good God, Ellery, what isn't there at one's door if one only gives ear? With the simple elements of figures one can accomplish so much. But how much more? You know what

the physiologists have brought us down to—a simple cell. All things are correlations of simple cells. But they can get no farther. Howsoever far they go they don't get beyond that. Now the elements of mathematics—Numbers are as simple as cells, and as wonderful in combinations and complex structures as any organic products. Who is going to set a limit or a term to the power of figures?"

These speculations, as you may conceive, were too deep for me, and I could not follow him. But you will see why I was justified in my statement to Miss Westermains: it would be well if she could humanize Haviland.

After the engagement I doubted, often. What sort of reaping would ensue from that fallow heart? Haviland was at best a shadowy friend. What sort of husband would he be?

That conversation of ours was recalled to me by Miss Westermains herself one day later. I had not seen Haviland for some weeks, having been away from town, and when I met her by accident in the park she let me know, in her straightforward way, what ailed her.

"I have been thinking over what you said once," she said after a little exchange of formalities. "Perhaps you are right." I suppose my face was blank. "I mean about Mr. Haviland's overwork."

"Oh!" said I, understanding.

"I don't think he is very well. He looks run down. I wish you could persuade him to take a change."

"But you—" I began, and she waved that aside.

"No; he won't listen to me. I suppose he thinks I don't know," she said, plaintively. "But he would probably pay attention to you. I think he ought to take a holiday."

She had only talked of overwork, but I think she would not have resented my remark about humanization then. I don't know. Women are oddly illogical. I told her that I had not seen Haviland for some time.

"I wish you would," she said, pleadingly.

That pitiful appeal sent me, as a matter of fact, to Haviland's house that very

evening. He had a rambling place in an old-fashioned square, and had built out a huge laboratory over the yard. I must confess that I was agreeably disappointed by his appearance and bearing. He was in high spirits, and, for him, very human. He greeted me with warmth, and asked after my travels, said no word of himself or his work, and finally suggested that we should dine at the club to which we both belonged.

"The fact is, my dear fellow," he said when we were comfortably settled in the cab, "I've been keeping my nose to the grind-stone, and I want a change."

I took the opportunity to carry out my promise to Miss Westermains at this opening, and he listened agreeably.

"Yes," he assented, "I think you're right. I've only one or two small points to settle, and then I shall be free."

At dinner he was quite human, talked of a current play, discussed politics with detachment but a broad intelligence, and brought up the affairs of several friends we had in common. Howlett, observing us, came over from another table.

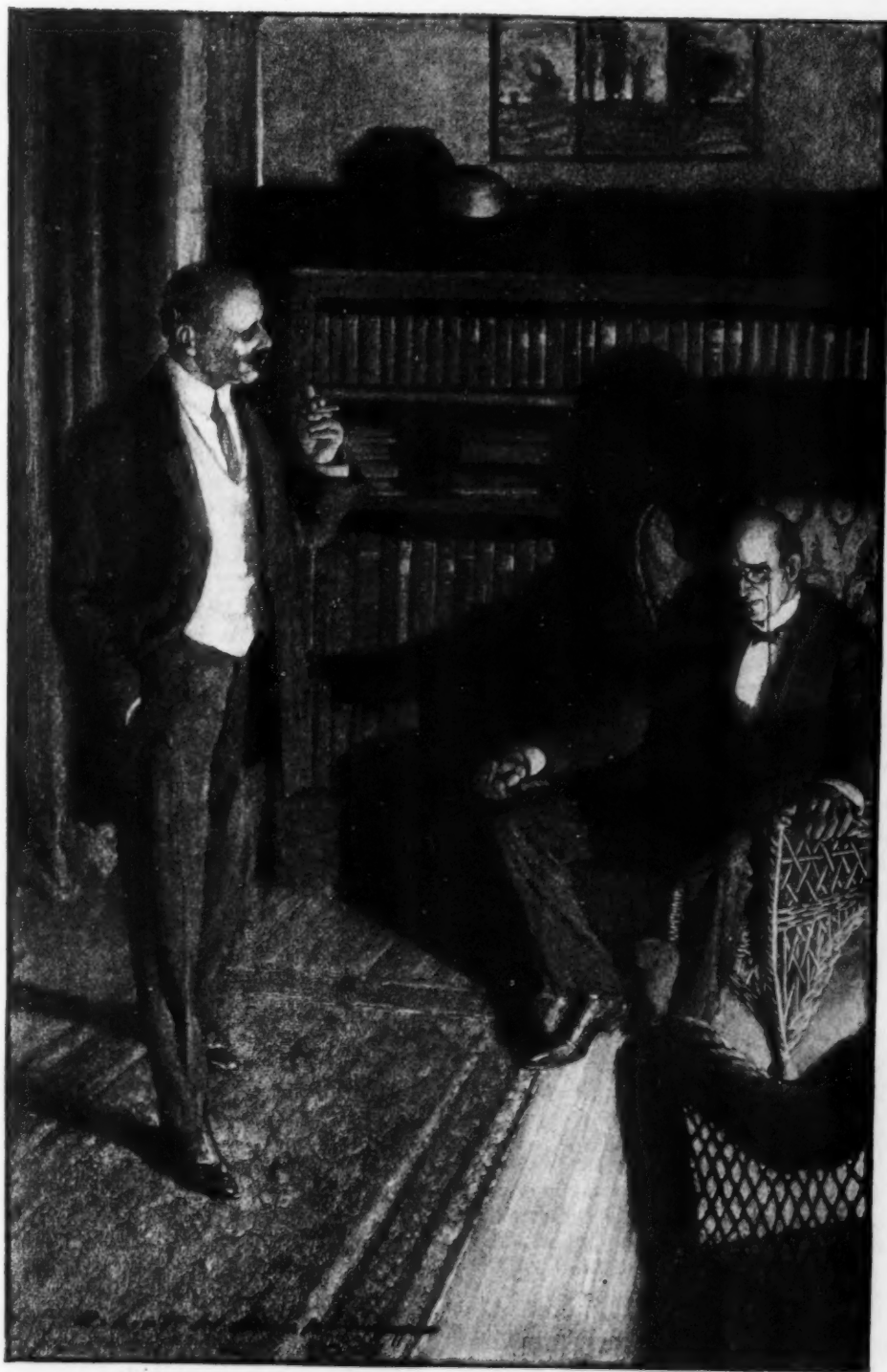
"My dear Haviland, welcome!" he said. "Glad to see you again at last. I was going to write to you about Strange. You know he's gone to the Tropical Hospital at Zanzibar, and the work he undertook for the Encyclopedia is all off. I wanted to know if you could take it on."

A curious look crept into Haviland's eye. "I'm afraid not," he said, slowly. "I'm on another lay now. I'm no authority. Get one of Strange's associates—Jackson, say. I'm not interested in that any longer."

"What's the game?" asked Howlett, leaning on a chair and smiling.

Haviland's fingers trembled as he lifted the glass of claret. "I'll tell you later," he said.

Howlett nodded and left the dining-room, but as it happened we did not see him again that night. He made one of a bridge party while Haviland was still in the club, and so he missed the story. I think I only got part of it, rendered to me thus partially because of my ignorance; but I doubt if I should have understood more had I listened to Havi-



"Yes—I'll go to bed—after the—as soon as I've finished—to-night"

land's full scientific explanations. He smoked a cigar, showed signs of restlessness and at last began.

"You can congratulate me, if you will, Ellery," he said, and a fine smile lit up his delicate features. I looked inquiringly, wondering if he was to announce the date of his marriage in this more human mood; but it was not so. "I've practically got what I've been working for these five years," he explained, "the interpretation of the cosmos in terms of numbers."

I suppose my face was blank, for he went on quickly: "I can hardly expect you to credit me, for I can hardly believe it myself. Of course, I don't mean to say that I have solved the Riddle of the Universe. That would be an absurd claim. All I can say is that I have discovered and set up a definite relationship between the cosmic force and numbers."

"My dear fellow!" I gasped.

"There can be no doubt so far," he proceeded with a certain feverish eagerness, plucking at the cigar with his fingers. "I have established the relationship, but I don't quite understand it myself, yet." He laughed a rather frightened, deprecatory laugh. "It's only the beginning, of course. I shall hand it on to other workers presently. It is not one man's work; it is a thousand men's—ten thousand—" He waved his hand. "There is no end to the vistas this discovery opens up. They are infinite, like the Force. We shall never compass them. But I have done my share, and shall do more. Ah, if life were only—*infinite*."

His chin sunk dejectedly upon his breast, and he stared sadly into vacancy out of eyes that saw nothing. I began to feel some alarm. Was it possible that his long and sedulous devotion to science had ended in turning Haviland's brain? As he sat there glaring, a frail thing of nerves, racked with his imaginary horror of a mortality which no sane man questions, he gave me the impression of an unbalanced, overwrought spirit. Fanatic! Yes, I amended my summary. It was the fanatic rather than the scientist that sat there, bereft of all fire and motion. I broke the silence which had grown awkward to me.

"I give you my best congratulations, but I don't profess to understand."

He looked up suddenly, recovered in sanity and cheerfulness.

"You shall see it, Ellery, although it is not complete. There is a little more to do to it. But you have always been so sympathetic that I should like you—only you—to see it."

"To see what?" I cried with sharp emphasis in my fears for his reason.

"The machine," he said dreamily. "I worked it into a machine. It was complex; it was a web of intricacy, but it seemed better, wiser, more permanent."

"A machine!" I repeated, marveling.

Haviland rose suddenly. "Yes, we will go back now," he said with an air of authority. "I will show it to you. But you must consider it incomplete. Come!"

We drove back to the house. Haviland once more elated, and myself in a tangle of vague alarms and doubts. The house, cheerfully lighted, seemed to forbid any fears as morbid, and the laboratory into which Haviland led me was a bright, comfortable room, very workmanlike and well-fitted. Innumerable signs and evidences of the man's work lay about on floor and table—chemicals, batteries, a gas engine, retorts, charts, and electric appliances of all kinds. Haviland proceeded to the farthest corner and pulled back a curtain which screened a part of the laboratory.

"It is run partly by electric motor and partly by a device of my own in connection with polarization," he said in a low voice, and then lifted a silk wrapping which enshrouded a tall object, some six feet in height, in front of him. I got the impression then and it remained with me, of a huge, brazen altar, sparkling with innumerable, tiny discs of brass and silver and copper. It was built in domes and circuited by a mass of golden wires. It looked alive, a delicate, sensitive thing, shivering in nerves of constituent metals. Its tendrils quivered, its discs shone. Haviland was speaking in a voice which was keyed very low, almost hushed.

"The manipulation is made with that board and these switches. I use the silver domes as detachers in the various de-

grees and spheres. The antimony zones isolate. The gold cam controls the periodicity of the negative—"

"But, my dear fellow, I don't understand," I gasped. A gentle smile crept over his face.

"How can you expect to when it has taken me five years, and I am only just beginning?" he asked.

I was amazed; I was astounded. Was Haviland mad? Yet this astonishing and supremely beautiful thing could hardly be the work of a madman. It glittered at me in the electric light as if it were watching, as if it pondered and considered.

Its mesh of wires was like a golden texture, an intricate pattern. There was something unearthly in its perfection. One copper strand lay inert, detached, as the one thing dead in that cage of live beings. Haviland touched it with fingers as sensitive as the wires among which they played.

"I haven't made this connection yet," he said. "But I shall make it to-night. I finished the calculation this afternoon. It has taken me months. But it came out justly. There is nothing now between me and the cosmic force—nothing. Here is the interpreter, the key, the window, the door into the Unknown and the Unknowable. If we had a thousand years to use it!"

He replaced the silk covering and turned away, sadness once more investing him; and together we returned to the house. I was dazed, and I did not know what to think. In Haviland as I watched him I could see nothing, now, even of the fanatic; he was just a tired man, resting his head on his hands in a reverie. Presently he came out of his dream.

"I'm sorry, old chap," he said. "I was thinking— You'll have some whiskey, wont you?"

He rang for the glasses and, until the man brought them, chatted on indifferent matters, in particular about a picture which hung on his wall, and which was new to me.

"It was in the lumber-room," he said. "I think my father bought it. Miss Westermains insisted on having it out. She said it was valuable."

"Why, yes," said I, "as valuable as it is beautiful. It's a very good specimen of the man's work."

When the door was shut upon the servant he leaned over to me.

"I'd like you to see it at work," he whispered. "You've seen it. I should like you to see it work. You must come when I've got it quite finished—after to-night—to-night."

His eyes trailed to the door wistfully. I drank my whiskey hastily.

"Look here, Haviland, old man, I should go to bed and get a rest," I told him. "You're played out. It's only fair to Miss Westermains."

"Yes, yes, you're right. I'll go to bed—after the—as soon as I've finished—to-night," he said, absently.

I could do no more. I saw where his thoughts were, and I said good-by and left him. I went away still debating in my mind the ugly question of his sanity.

Two days afterwards I received a letter from Haviland. It was quite short and written in a scrawling hand which I did not recognize. He wrote:

Dear Ellery:

You were the first to see my cosmic instrument. I want you to be the first to try it. Can you come to-morrow evening at eight o'clock?

Yours sincerely,
Edward Haviland.

I accepted by wire, and had to put off an engagement to do so. Somehow Haviland claimed me. I did not understand the degeneration of the handwriting. It opened an appalling vista of possibilities. In the afternoon I ran across Lady Cope at a concert, and I inquired after her niece.

"She is very well, thank you," said the comfortable lady. "She didn't come with me, because she was busy packing."

"Packing?" I repeated, interrogatively.

"Yes; she's going abroad for a week or two to join friends in Bordighera. She leaves by to-night's train."

When I had parted with her I wondered why I had not said something about the marriage. What I could not ask Miss Westermains might very properly be put to her aunt. That marriage

somehow had got on my nerves. I liked the girl, and I was a little afraid for her.

I was at Haviland's house punctually, having snatched a brief meal on my way, and the first sight of him gave me instant relief. He was bright and smiling, and beamed with cordiality. His right hand was bound up with a handkerchief, and, he informed me, had received a slight injury—an explanation of an obvious kind which rendered my forebodings rather ridiculous. It appeared that Haviland expected me to dine, and was crestfallen when I told him I had already had my dinner. He was as simple as a child in such matters.

"Anyway," he said, his face clearing, "come and see me eat. I've had nothing yet to-day."

This did not look so well, but he showed no signs of fatigue, eating sparingly but quickly, and talking all the time. I spoke of Miss Westermain *à propos* of my meeting with Lady Cope and he suddenly stopped eating and stared before him with a frown.

"I'm sorry—I'm sorry," he said, slowly. "I'm afraid I forgot. Do you mind handing me that bunch of letters yonder, Ellery?"

I did so, noticing that they were almost without exception unopened. They might have been the fruit of the post for several days. He searched among the envelopes and found what he wanted.

"I'm sorry," he said, in tones of distress. "I don't think I can have read it properly. Marion wrote asking me to see her this afternoon." He frowned.

"Lady Cope said she goes by the night boat to-night," I said.

"Yes. I'm sorry." He dwelt on his regret musingly for a few minutes, and then said deprecatingly, "You see, I've been taken up by this thing."

At that mention all remembrance of his default slipped from him, as it were, by magic, and he turned to me with his eyes shining.

"Ellery, I've been experimenting. It's marvelous. It's astounding—Man, it goes beyond all human conception!"

"Tell me what it is like," I urged, myself excited by his fervor.

"The openings I have made have been entirely experimental," he said, controlling his musical voice to a monotonous level. "You see, I am only feeling my way—the instrument is greater than I knew. I builded better—I don't understand it all yet. That is why I must be careful." He glanced at his hand.

"Is that how you came by your injury?" I asked. "The instrument—the electricity?"

"No." He shook his head. "Not the instrument, or the mere materials. It was through the essentials, the beyond. I don't know what happened. The long slide of the marl was rushing past."

"What?" I cried in terror.

"The slide." He looked up out of his dream. "Oh, I forgot. I haven't told you that. I began quietly with the lowest commensuration to test it all. The sensation was extraordinary. Ellery, whenever I have put it in operation I have had that long slide of marl and the sensation of falling. It—it frightens. I wonder why. It comes first with a mist, a wreathing, giddy mist, and then all opens out. I see the unplumbed space and the moving cosmic dust. Then the slide comes. My God, how wonderful! Ellery, I have felt somehow as if I were in some relationship with the cosmic Force at those moments. What does it mean?"

He sank into silence. As to what it meant, alas, I thought I knew now. These were the manifestations of sheer insanity, of a monomaniac. Research had wrecked that intricate and delicate brain.

"I suppose those repeated chords come from something incidental. I don't suppose they matter," Haviland was proceeding. "Do you know I was absurd enough to remember that phrase—I believe you told me of it—the music of the spheres. Only it wasn't that. It was—"

"Look here, Haviland," I broke in. "Do you mind telling me something? Did you sleep last night?"

"Sleep!" He seemed to switch off as it were. "No, dear man, I don't think I did. I forget. I think I was in the laboratory."

"Haviland," I said, rising. I was a bigger man than he, and I felt the strength and force of mere physical hu-



i was falling into a gulf—a great, wide chasm of space!

manity in my blood and muscles. "Haviland, I'm going to tell you something. You're ill, you've been overworking; and you're going to see a doctor now."

"Yes, yes." He waved his hand, speaking pleasantly. "I know you're right. I'm going to take a long rest. As soon as I've shown you this I'll turn in and we'll go to-morrow to—what was that place we spent a day in somewhere? But I must explain just a little before we go into the laboratory. I laughed when you said the other day that you couldn't understand. Of course, you couldn't. Why, it's taken me years to come to the Gates and knock on them. But I'm going to start you on the way."

The bandage about his hand fell away on the gesture he made and I got a glimpse of something—I don't know what. I could not say what, even now in the calmness of distant years. But it gave me a feeling of fear—Oh, well, it doesn't matter in relation to what I have to come to presently. He readjusted the bandage, and put one finger on the thumb of the other hand.

"You know enough, Ellery, to understand that all sciences are interchangeable; that is, that all forms of Force are related, co-ordinated, and pass into one another—sound, heat, electricity, all are modes of motion. But these sciences are inferential, inductive. There is only one *absolute* science, which is mathematics, and which must be the common basis of all the others. Common basis spells common solution. That is where my synoptic theory comes in. I have a visual survey of the sciences. You know that our knowledge flows through a few sources we call senses. But senses, like the asymptotes of mathematics, are capable of infinite extension. The only solution, then, is mathematical. All mathematicians know that there are planes and planes of combinations still unraveled. If a man lives to a century he has unbounded horizons of the science still pressing for solution. It is only possible under a scheme which will reduce to a system. My system—"

I had heard a ring a few moments earlier, and now the man-servant opened the door of the dining-room.

"Miss Westermain, sir," he said flatly and without emphasis.

Haviland stared bewildered. I looked at the clock. In an hour or two Miss Westermain was due at Charing Cross, according to Lady Cope.

She came into the room with a little rush.

"Edward—" and then she saw me. "Oh, Mr. Ellery!" She showed no sense of confusion to be discovered there at that time of night. "Edward, I did not hear from you, and I am going to-night. I called on my way to the station. I sent my boxes in advance. I couldn't bear to leave without seeing you. You didn't come. I was afraid you were ill."

"I—I am afraid I forgot," stammered Haviland. But he had pretty manners when he returned among human things. He took her to a chair. "The fact is, dear, I have been up to my neck in work," he said, "and it passed from my mind. I will never forgive myself. But my stupidity has brought you here. It is charming."

I could see the pain in his face, and perhaps foolishly I ran into the gap.

"Haviland had just completed an important discovery," I said. "I'm afraid he has been dead to the world."

She glanced from me to him with a dawning sense of admiration. "Edward, you are working too hard. Mr. Ellery promised me—"

"Yes, yes," he said eagerly. "He and I are going to take a holiday to-morrow, like you, Marion. Where was it, Ellery?"

He didn't wait for an answer, but continued, "Ellery's right. I have just finished something which is very interesting, very—" He hesitated as if for a word which would soothe her—"Very epoch-making. I asked him to come and see it. Now you are here, dear, it is doubly delightful. My best friend and my—my future wife." He turned to me, quite recovered and gay. "Ellery, this will increase the interest of the investigation."

"What is it, Edward?" she asked. "I only called in on my way to Charing Cross."

"Oh, it won't take long," he said gleefully. "I'm so glad you came. You and

Ellery will be the first people to bridge the gulf."

"Bridge—" she echoed.

He laughed. "I will tell you later. Ellery understands. But as you have so little time, let us get to work. Marion, this is a crucial moment in the history of the world, of Life. My dear, I am glad you came."

I knew she didn't understand, understood no more than I did, but we both followed him. He passed out of the dining-room, along the wide corridor to the study at the back, and into the laboratory which was built beyond it. It was a large room, and of a handsome design; but when we entered, it was in gloom save for one corner, in which stood the Instrument, as I remembered. The curtain was drawn aside and the little center of light made war upon the further darkness, but ineffectually, transmuting it merely to a place of shadows. Haviland pointed to chairs beside the table over which the electric light swung under its green shade, and he himself went to the silk-covered Instrument. Miss Westermmain took a seat on the opposite side of the table from Haviland and myself. Haviland withdrew the silk, and the Instrument shivered and glittered at me. It was alive!

I saw Miss Westermmain look at it, and put her hand before her eyes.

"I will try the lower grades first," said Haviland in a low voice.

His figure came between me and the Instrument, and I heard a tiny buzzing, as of an electric current fizzing in a telephone. It grew in volume, and suddenly a curtain of heavy smoke, as it were, clouded my eyes, smoke lit with flashes. Then there was a vast field of blue mist, no, of blue space, and a drumming was in my ears. I was conscious of acute distress, even of terror, of palpable terror. Haviland's voice issued out of nothingness to me.

"I wish I knew what that was. It opens always that way. Is it the primal whirl?"

The room came back to me; Miss Westermmain's eyes were covered with her hands. Haviland was shaking as he leaned against the table.

"I went out that way from the first," he said. "But it is only the beginning."

"It—oh, it's horrible!" gasped Miss Westermmain.

He did not hear.

"I will try another combination," he went on in his low voice. He moved to the Instrument again. It blinked and flashed at me in the brilliant light. Miss Westermmain put out her hand, as if to restrain him, and her cloak fell open, disclosing a flash of pink silk about her neck. I did not see Haviland touch anything, but his figure wavered before my eyes; then he appeared to throw up an arm as if to ward off something. After that came the blue mist, not the blue space, and a sense of fear: it passed into elation. Then there was a sense of motion, of motion infinite in its effect. I was falling into a gulf of blue, a great, wide, empty, boundless chasm of space. Then again I was spindrift in space, a tangle—of broken senses, of half-lights, of new feelings. I seemed possessed of a great power as of knowledge—things were breaking in on me—and then something went by, swift, infinitely swift—a slide, a country of marl extending forever—a vivid flash of pink in the slide—

I was aware of a cry, but I could not tell if it was I who had cried. It died in a faint moaning, like echoes in eddies—and then I saw Haviland. One arm drooped helplessly, and his face was ghastly white.

"What is it?" he gasped. "Did you see it? What did you see?"

"I saw a slide," I said tremulously, "and a world of marl—something went down it infinitely swift, with pink."

"I saw it too," he cried. "Nothing else?" he asked fiercely. "Nothing else?"

"Nothing else," I replied, "only the pink." We looked across the table together. Miss Westermmain was not there. We stared at each other, and Haviland's lower lip was sucked in pitifully.

"The pink!" he said like a whimpering child.

"Nonsense, man," I said, but my voice was weak and lacked conviction. "Let us call her. She has been frightened."

"She wore pink," he whispered.

"Nonsense, man," I said. "Your in-

fernal machine has scared her. Let us look for her."

"I can't move," he said in the same voice, and then I saw. His right leg was broken below the knee, and the left hand was cracked across the knuckles.

"My God!" I said, and got to my feet and staggered down the darkened laboratory. Once out back of the house I recovered some of my wits. Miss Westermmain must have gone that way in her flight. I called the servant, who told me that no one had gone out by the front door. We made a search together, but found no trace of her in the house.

"She must have gone by the yard door," I said to the man. He had gathered from me that his master's experiments had frightened his guest. I went back to the laboratory, having forgotten Haviland's condition, which did not say much for my complete recovery. He sat where I had left him, and apparently he expected no news from me, for he said merely:

"It was the slide— You saw the pink, Ellery."

For him it was a certainty. *What* was?

"She has escaped by the yard," I said almost angrily.

He shook his head. "It was the pink, Ellery. I have played with things—I don't know."

"Look, man," said I. "Bear up. I'm going to send for a doctor for you at once; and meanwhile you must drink a whiskey. Wait!"

He pointed with his uninjured arm at a bottle of pure alcohol, and I managed to mix some for him to drink.

"Ellery," he said, "I know what happened; but I can undo it. I can reverse the movement. That will bring things back. Yes, yes, help me to the keyboard. Quick!"

He leaned forward eagerly, but I shook my head. "Haviland, for God's sake, don't touch that again, and let loose forces of which you have no knowledge. Wait and I will come back in a moment, as soon as I have seen your servant."

I hastened from the laboratory and encountering the servant in the hall, gave him instructions to fetch a surgeon at

once, and, when he was gone, was returning to Haviland when I heard a noise in a room on the right. At once I thought of Miss Westermmain, and entering, turned on the light; it was empty. I went to the window and threw it open. Outside it was a still, cloudless night. And now something happened which chilled me to the bone. The night, as I say, was absolutely still; not a breath stirred on a frosty October night. But along the hall came the sound of a fierce rushing wind, whistling and howling—and then it died away, and a low moaning ensued, and that too died away.

Half overcome with a nameless dread, for a moment I succeeded in pulling myself together, and burst out of the room, down the hall, and into the laboratory.

Haviland, despite his broken leg, had dragged himself from his chair and was standing with his unwounded arm resting on the Instrument. He was supporting himself entirely by the accursed thing; his face was violently contorted.

"Ellery—Ellery!" he moaned, and then: "She came back—I reversed it—she came back. Oh, my God! If you had seen!—my God! Has she—has It gone? Has It gone?"

Suddenly he made a quick movement of the discs and with a lurch fell forward almost noiselessly to the floor; the accursed Instrument, falling in his fall, shivered in pieces about him, so that he lay in a mesh of broken glass and metal. When I reached him he was dead.

I have put everything down as I recorded it at the time, and I offer no explanation. If you ask if I have any theory, I must reply, no. Miss Westermmain was never heard of again. The boat train for Calais by which she was to have traveled, met with disaster in the early morning, and two carriages were completely burned. It was always assumed that Miss Westermmain was one of the unhappy victims. The doctor who arrived shortly after Haviland's death certified it as due to failure of the heart from the shock of the accident which had befallen him in carrying out an experiment. I have never broken silence as to the fell story till now, but I have never ceased to wonder.

The Snuffle-Sneeze

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "The Whiggin," etc

THE morning after Mr. and Mrs. Fanning and the baby moved into their newly purchased built-by-the-contractor house, Mrs. Fanning was bending over the kitchen range, trying to cook a breakfast. Her eyes were red and sore, and from time to time she coughed, for the smoke was pouring from the range at every pore. Outside the rain fell in a deluge. The baby, in its carriage, was crying, and Mr. Fanning was trying to shave with cold water in a soup bowl, and kitchen soap that would not lather. All this was but natural on the day after moving day, for Maggie, the maid they had had for two years, had given notice as soon as the furniture had arrived, and was now, so far as they were concerned, no more.

Mrs. Fanning had just wiped the smoke from her eyes with her apron when the back door opened and Mrs. Cornelia Whiggin-Plipp, next door neighbor and holder of the first mortgage on the house, entered, followed by what at the first glance seemed to be an ill-assorted rummage-sale on legs. The water ran from the walking pile of rags in streams.

"Well!" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "Here she is! I brought her, and I'm sorry I did, and you'll be far more sorry!"

Mrs. Fanning blew the smoke from immediately in front of her face, and Mr. Fanning put down his shaving brush.

"Brought who?" he asked, for the Whiggin-Plipp had not said she was going to bring anyone or anything.

"My name for her," said the Whiggin-Plipp, turning up her rat-like little nose, and letting her red shawl fall back over her black calico dress, "is an old snuffle-sneeze. That's my name for her. And if I was asked what she was, I'd say she wasn't much of anything. That's what I'd say."

The perambulating rummage sale, standing in the water that dripped from its outer layers, began peeling itself. It evidently had the worst kind of cold in the head, and every half-minute it snuffled. Between every eighth and ninth snuffle it sneezed, not loudly, but with an inefficient little "tch" of a sneeze that seemed an expression of hopelessness. The disconsolate snuffling was extremely depressing. The old Snuffle-sneeze laid one outer garment after another on a kitchen chair, until she came to the red yarn hood, but when she began to untie this the Whiggin-Plipp stopped her.

"Don't!" she said sharply. "Don't take it off. You aint going to stay, and you know it, and I know it. I pity them that would want you to stay. Get to work!"

The Snuffle-sneeze shuffled dolefully up to the stove, raised a lid and let out a cloud of smoke, and coughed. Then she put the lid on again and sneezed gently, and snuffled three times. Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp looked at her with the uttermost disapprobation.

"If she aint an old Snuffle-sneeze, I just wish you'd tell me!" she said disgustedly. "I don't know a more worthless creature from one end of this world to the other. If anybody has my sympathy, you have, and I hope you are satisfied, now you've got her. I wouldn't be."

"But why did you bring her? What's she here for?" asked Mr. Fanning.

"She's water-logged, that's my opinion of her!" said the Whiggin-Plipp positively. "She's water-soaked from sole to crown. Aint you, Ardelia?"

"Tch!" sneezed the Snuffle-sneeze.

"But why—*why* did you bring her?" insisted Mr. Fanning.

"My opinion is," said the Whiggin-Plipp, "you could soak her over night in a tub of water, and she wouldn't be any

more water-soaked than she is. And she's smoked. She's all smoked up. She's as smoked as a ham, and more so. Aint you, Ardelia?"

"Tch!" sneezed Ardelia.

"Maybe you can stand her. I can't," said the Whiggin-Plipp. "She'd drive me crazy in a day. And you needn't thank me for bringing her," she added generously, "for if ever there was a curse about the house it is Ardelia Gotch. I pity you. I do indeed."

"But *why* is she here?" insisted Mr. Fanning. Already under Ardelia's skillful hands the smoke of scorched fried potatoes was adding itself to the other smoke from the range.

"Why?" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "She's your new maid. That's why!"

"Thank you," said Mrs. Fanning, who had been watching the Snuffle-sneeze with amazement. "It is very kind of you, Mrs. Plipp, very kind, indeed, to take such an interest in us. We appreciate it, indeed we do, but—but I'm afraid—"

"Ardelia, get into your wraps!" said the Whiggin-Plipp, without the least emotion. "You aint wanted, and I knew you wouldn't be. Get into your duds, and we'll go."

"You are not offended?" said Mrs. Fanning, anxiously.

"Land's sake, no!" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "I'm only doing what must be done. Ardelia is like a leak in the plumbing—you've got to have it, and the sooner you have it the sooner you get over it. Everybody tries Ardelia, and she don't suit, so the sooner the better, and be done with it."

"She seems to have a cold," said Mr. Fanning, as the Snuffle-sneeze piled one garment after another on her shoulders.

"Cold?" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "Cold? She's got eight hundred colds in her, one atop of the other. It's been twenty-two years since she was without a cold in the head. Ardelia, how long since you was without a cold in the head?"

"Eight—tch!—teen years," said Ardelia despondently.

"So she says," said the Whiggin-Plipp, "but land knows you can't believe a word she says. She don't know no more about

the truth than she does about cooking, and that's nothing. Nor about housework, neither."

As she arose she looked at the Snuffle-sneeze critically.

"She's water-logged," she said. "And she's stupid. And between you and me it's good riddance to bad rubbish to get rid of her so easy. Come along, Ardelia!"

Ardelia, who had arrived without emotion, followed the Whiggin-Plipp out of the kitchen into the rain without emotion.

"Now, what do you think of that?" asked Mr. Fanning when the door had closed. "Can you beat that?"

"It is her notion of being friendly," said Mrs. Fanning. "And she *is* kind. Who else would come in such a rain to bring a servant to a new family? But did you ever see such a creature as—what was it she called her?"

"Snuffle-sneeze," said Mr. Fanning. "And I'll tell you one thing, Mary; this is the last time I ever try to shave with kitchen soap. It simply will not foam."

"Why don't you try the soap-powder?" asked Mrs. Fanning. "Or perhaps, if you wait a few minutes, the Whiggin-Plipp will come over with a stick of shaving soap. She seems to divine everything we need and then supplies it."

"No, thanks!" said Mr. Fanning. "If the shaving soap she would bring should be on a par with old Snoozelum-sneezelum, I prefer the kitchen soap."

But the Whiggin-Plipp did not appear again until ten o'clock, and then it was at the front door, and she was dressed in the garments of state she wore when she attended meetings of the Ladies' Civic Union, including a hat with a red rose and a green plume. The bell did not ring to announce her arrival, for bells in built-by-the-contractor houses do not ring until they are mended, and the Whiggin-Plipp, after knocking on the door for some time, opened it and rapped on the floor with the tip of her dripping umbrella. Mrs. Fanning appeared at the head of the stairs. As was natural on the day after moving day, her head was done up in a white cloth and she wore a gingham apron. The Whiggin-Plipp looked up at her.

"Good-afternoon," said the Whiggin-

Plipp. "Not that it *is* afternoon, but goodness knows I won't have time to call again this afternoon, and I never heard of making formal calls in the morning. This is a formal call."

"I'm so sorry I am not dressed," said Mrs. Fanning. "Will you come up? I have to watch the baby while I work—"

"No, I won't come up!" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "I'm a Whiggin, if I did marry a Plipp, and if a Whiggin can't be received in the parlor it won't be received at all. A Whiggin is a Whiggin, and a bedroom ain't a parlor, whatever it may be."

Mrs. Fanning came down.

"Well," said the visitor, when she had followed Mrs. Fanning into the parlor, "we might as well begin talking servants now as later, for that is what we'll end up with. And I don't keep 'em, and you ain't got one, so that is a short horse and soon curried. And as for talking about old Snuffle-sneeze, I'm above it. Especially when I've got this rig on. So that ends that, and it's no use saying I hope you'll call on me, for you're liable to be over to borrow something any minute. And the worst is, I can't refuse. I've got the first mortgage on this house, and I feel it is my duty to do what I can to take care of anybody that is fool enough to buy this house. So that ends that, and I may as well say I've brought her, bag and baggage."

"Brought her? Who?" asked Mrs. Fanning.

"Her name I don't know from Adam, but she won't stay, and you needn't think she will, so it doesn't matter. You might as well ask her in, and be done with her."

"But who is she?" asked Mrs. Fanning.

"She's your new housemaid," said the Whiggin-Plipp.

"Oh, you dear!" cried Mrs. Fanning, flying to the door, while the Whiggin-Plipp, quite unheeded, snapped, "Dear fiddlesticks!" The maid was standing at the door when Mrs. Fanning opened it, her baggage at her feet, and when she saw Mrs. Fanning she smiled good naturedly. She was a German girl, strong, healthy, and efficient-looking, with rosy cheeks and fair hair.

"George! Come in!" cried Mrs. Fanning, calling her husband and speaking to the maid in one breath. Mr. Fanning came to the top of the stairs, and when he saw the maid, he came down.

"Goot morgen, lady," said the maid. "Eighteen dollar mont', yes?"

"Eighteen dollars a month? Yes, oh, yes!" said Mrs. Fanning eagerly. "George, this is our new maid. You don't mind a child in the family?"

"Sure, no!" said the girl. "I cook fine. I been mit nobleman families in Shermanny—make bed, make bread, everyt'ings!"

"Show her her room!" called the Whiggin-Plipp impatiently.

"Will you come up and see your room?" asked Mrs. Fanning.

"Sure!" said the girl, leading the way up the stairs. "My name she is Teeny!"

"Oh, George! She is a jewel!" said Mrs. Fanning, pressing her husband's hand ecstatically.

"She looks good to me!" he admitted.

"Nice baby," said Teeny as they passed the room where, caged with a chair, the baby played on the floor. Mrs. Fanning squeezed her husband's hand again. They proceeded to the third floor. There the rain on the roof made a loud noise, and Teeny frowned. When she opened the door of the only finished room on the third floor—the room that was to be her own—she stood still.

"*Nein!*" she said emphatically.

"Don't you like it?" asked Mrs. Fanning anxiously. Teeny hesitated for words, and pointed to the unceiled roof. Trickles of water were coming through in fifty places, dripping to the floor and to the bed, which was already soaked through.

"In ein minute I gets me a cold," said Teeny firmly. "Such a rooms! Not for schweins even is such a rooms in Shermanny. Goot-by!"

It was vain trying to explain that as soon as the rain ceased Mr. Fanning would have one of the Whiggin-Plipp's relatives repair the built-by-the-contractor roof.

"Sure!" said Teeny. "Maybe she rains all times! Goot-by!"

Mrs. Fanning and her husband fol-

lowed Teeny down the stairs; there was no keeping her. At the bottom of the stairs, in the lower hall, they saw a bundle of rags that looked like another poorly conducted rummage-sale on legs.

"Well," said the Whiggin-Plipp sharply, "and now that's over, and here is old Snuffle-sneeze back! I let her in, for you may as well take her now as later, for that's what you'll do. Some try one girl, and some try forty, and some stay one week and some stay more, and some stay less, but rain drives them all away, and the predictions are 'continued rains.' I know these houses, for I've got a first mortgage on the whole twenty of 'em."

"Goot-by!" said Teeny, and went out of their lives forever, closing the door behind her as she went. Mr. and Mrs. Fanning looked at the Snuffle-sneeze, who stood patiently, awaiting the verdict. She was like Death in her patience. She was in no haste. She seemed to know that sooner or later she would be chosen. She was, for the owners of the built-by-the-contractor houses in that neighborhood, the Inevitable Servant.

"Well," the housewife would say with a sigh, "I hate it, but I'll have to have Ardelia back."

"Can't you get along without a maid?" the husband would say.

"It is practically the same thing, having Ardelia," would be the answer.

The Whiggin-Plipp spoke first.

"Take off your duds," she commanded of the patient Ardelia. "You may as well begin now, for you've got to be the curse of this house sooner or later. It's no use showing her the room she has to sleep in," she added, to Mrs. Fanning, "for if ever there was a built-by-the-contractor maid to fit a built-by-the-contractor house, old Snuffle-sneeze is one. First job ever she got was in a built-by-the-contractor house, built by my own brother, and she got a cold in her head then, and she's had one ever since. She's got colds so thick, one atop of another, that it 'd take twelve mortal lives to peel 'm off one by one, and it aint worth while. She's water-logged."

"I'm afraid—" began Mrs. Fanning faintly.

"I don't blame you!" said the Whig-

gin-Plipp. "I'd hate it myself. But when you've got a house where there is no difference between the maid's room and a shower bath, you've got to have a maid that is used to it. If the water don't come through your roof in a sprinkle, it is going to come through in a stream. Ardelia don't mind, and she's the only maid in this state that don't. She's water-soaked already. She's soaked to the bone. Ardelia Gotch can go to bed in a bathtub full of ice water and sleep like a babe with a stream as big around as a stove-pipe falling splash on her chest. Can't you, Ardelia?"

"Yes—tch!—ma'm!" said Ardelia.

Ardelia had slowly peeled off her wrappings. Now she took off her red yarn hood. Mrs. Fanning had expected to see an old woman. Instead she saw a maiden of twenty-five. Her thin black hair was drawn smoothly back from her forehead. She looked like a peeled onion.

"Humph!" said the Whiggin-Plipp, looking at her. "You are getting balder every minute, Ardelia. You look a sight!"

"Yes—tch!—ma'm," said Ardelia, sadly. "They do say—tch! tch!—so much dampness aint good for growing nothing in."

The Whiggin-Plipp took up her umbrella and put her hand on the door handle.

"You needn't thank me," she said to Mrs. Fanning, "for you wont feel thankful when you get used to her. She gets worse the longer you have her. And as for your hair," she said, turning to Ardelia, "the least said the better, but in my opinion what you'd ought to have been supplied with is seaweed."

"Mrs. Plipp," said Mrs. Fanning, "I must thank you—"

"You needn't!" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "Many a call I expect to make in this house, and so far as I see nowadays, all women that aint suffragettes is talkers-about-servants. So I'm only preparing you so you wont sit and twiddle your thumbs when I come calling. You can talk about old Snuffle-sneeze."

Mrs. Fanning smiled.

"And from what I know about her," said the Whiggin-Plipp, "you'll have plenty to say."



"This case is your opportunity, young man"

The Man That Lost His Chance

BY REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

Author of "The House of Bondage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES G. WRENN

AS the bell ended its tinkling, Warner seized the swing-arm of his desk-telephone and drew it toward him. He was a tall, slim man of thirty-five, black-haired, clean-shaven and quietly dressed, to whose regular features and pale face a compressed mouth gave something of asceticism.

"Hello," he said.

He spoke clearly into the black ear of the transmitter; but the voice that responded was a gentle purr.

"Mr. Warner?"

"Yes."

"This is Mr. Lovett. Will you kindly step up to the president's office, Mr. Warner? Mr. Marbury would like to see you."

Would he step up to the room of that cloud-hidden god who controlled the tangled destinies of the great G. P. & F. system? Would he comply with the request of the almost unseen Power that he had served for six years? Warner smiled; but his lips stiffened as he spoke again into the telephone.

"Very well," he said. "I'll be right up."

He passed down the narrow hall off

which opened the alcoves that served as offices for his fellow-attorneys in the railroad's legal department. Two of those attorneys, Green and Prentice, both well in their forties, were standing by the gate in the reception-room's rail when Warner paused to leave word of his destination with the uniformed negro in attendance there.

"If anybody asks for me," said Warner, and he could not deny his tone a note of triumph, "you may tell him that I am busy in Mr. Marbury's office."

Green, stroking his bald head, looked after the speaker.

"Busy with Daniel J.!" he said. "You mark my words, Jim; that man Warner will climb right over our heads before we know it."

But Warner did not hear this prophecy. He crossed the entire length of the terminal building by the passage above the train-shed and hurried into one of the rapid elevators to the seventh floor that his associates called "The Seventh Heaven." There he turned down another hall and paused before the unmarked door to the president's suite.

Then, in the strong light from a plate-glass window, you would have had a second and better look at Joel Warner. You would have seen that his carefully pressed suit was not of the latest cut, that it even assumed a tell-tale sheen at the elbows. You would have seen that, here and there, a suspicion of grey lurked in the man's scanty hair, and that the intelligent, lean face, with its high cheekbones and quiet blue eyes, had in it a trace of timidity sufficient to explain the need of its compressed lips. Still, you would have said that it was a pleasant face and an honest one, and you would have wished that its owner were in a better position than that of a mere private in the legal regiment of a great railroad.

Warner opened the door.

"Come in," said Lovett, the eternally suave and eternally smiling secretary. He had a face like a sheep's and his hands, perhaps from his habit of rubbing the one upon the other, were a polished pink. "Mr. Marbury is disengaged and waiting. This door, please."

Warner stepped through the door that

Lovett unclosed for him. He heard it shut at his back and found himself alone in the Olympian presence.

It was a large room, with a big Oriental rug on its parquet floor. There were comprehensive windows letting in a blare of winter sunlight; wide portraits of broad worthies upon the high walls; capacious mahogany chairs; a long, mahogany table; and near the farthest window, a tall mahogany roll-top desk—at which, turning toward Warner and smiling a "Good morning," sat the bulky, round figure of Daniel J. Marbury, constructed upon the ample scale of his business-surroundings.

Mr. Marbury, even in his hours of ease, was an impressive personage. No man ever more thoroughly resembled himself, and few so completely dressed for the part. His bulging, brilliant shoes were surmounted by white spats; the spats were topped by striped, pearl-grey trousers and above those trousers swelled, under a crackling white waistcoat, a well-filled paunch. Mr. Marbury always wore a brilliant necktie and a black frock coat with a white chrysanthemum in its lapel.

That was the way in which Warner looked at the railroad-president: from the ground upward. When, hesitant, the attorney reached Marbury's face, he saw it as he had theretofore seen it only in scudding glimpses: large and round, too, with a double chin, a bristling gray mustache, a bulbous nose, the gray side-whiskers of a British butler and penetrating black eyes beneath thick gray brows that nearly reached to the mass of gray hair upon the large, round head.

"Sit down," said Mr. Marbury, indicating a chair beside the desk and a silver-bound box upon it. "Sit down and have a cigar."

Warner obeyed.

The president lit a cigar for himself and then, with his own hand, extended the burning match for his employee.

"Mr. Warner," he began, "I have just received a telegram from the head of your department.

Warner caught his breath.

"From Mr. Gordon?" he asked.

The president nodded his gray head.

"I hope that Palm Beach is benefiting him, sir."

"No," said the president. "I'm sorry to say that it isn't. We all thought that he could at least be in shape to run up for a week in the middle of next month, but he wires me that his physician forbids his leaving Florida before spring."

Warner's heart gave a great bound. He knew that he had hoped for this, and yet, even now, he could not believe that it would be he, instead of his several seniors, who would be sought. He didn't wish old Gordon any ill; he didn't wish any ill to Green or Prentice; but he was employed in a system where fellow-workers were competitors. He wanted to be true, but the thing was too sudden, and he found himself murmuring, precisely as if he meant it:

"I am very sorry to hear that—very."

But the president did not seem to heed him.

"Not before spring," he repeated, fixing his black eyes upon Warner. "And we had hoped that he could at least give us a week on the fifteenth."

Warner nodded. He did not know what else was expected of him.

"The fifteenth," proceeded the president, "is the date for the legislative hearing on the State Railway Commission Bill."

Warner, blushing in embarrassment that he should ever have forgotten, remembered. He remembered that, at the last election, a silly tide of political revolt swamped the voting-booths; that a raw-boned legislator, new to the capital, had proposed the creation of a commission with arbitrary powers over the railways operating within the state; that the G. P. & F. lobby had been unable to prevent reference of this bill to a committee only partly in sympathy with the road; and that the road had been depending upon its chief counsel to win its cause by argument before the committee. He tried to cover his chagrin by a resort to the practical.

"I had assumed," he said, "that, if Mr. Gordon were absent, Mr. Cooper would undertake the task."

"That," said the president, "is what we all assumed; but we didn't calculate

on the fact that our First Assistant General Counsel is the sort of automobilist that drives his own car. This morning Mr. Cooper had a smash-up and broke his leg. I needn't tell you that it would be against the policy of this road to call upon outside talent—not medical, for Mr. Cooper, but legal, for ourselves. The case must therefore be taken before the committee by one of the men remaining in our own offices."

The president paused, but Warner dared not trust his voice to reply.

"Consequently," pursued the president, "I have been telegraphing to Mr. Gordon for his advice. Mr. Warner, Mr. Gordon suggests that you take the case."

It had come! After six years of waiting, after patience that had seemed exhausted and work that had seemed unnoticed, the chance had come at last! The stars in their courses had fought for him. Warner was more than ever afraid to speak; but speak, he felt he must.

"I'm gratified by Mr. Gordon's confidence," he said, "and, if you agree in his decision, I'll do my best."

The president smiled, not unkindly, a large, fat smile.

"I'm glad to hear you say that," he answered. "It reminds me of the day when I got the appointment to my first real office in the Maintenance of Way Department. You have the proper American sentiment, Mr. Warner. Faithful service has no limit to the rewards it earns in this country and this company. I do agree with Mr. Gordon's decision."

"Thank you," stammered Warner.

"I believe," the president resumed, "that you assisted Mr. Gordon in getting up the argument that he had prepared."

"No; that was Mr. Prentice."

"Hum. Then Prentice—However, Gordon names you, and I suppose he knows what he is talking about."

Warner bowed.

"Mr. Gordon says you will find the whole case, properly blocked out, in the top drawer of his safe. He depends, largely, upon the Act of 1870, which he says—" The president drew his glasses by their long tape and set them athwart his bulbous nose, the better to read a broad railroad-telegraph form

that lay on the desk before him—"which he says, according to his construction, makes the present bill wholly unconstitutional."

"In that case, Mr. Marbury, even if we lose the legislature, we are sure to win in the Supreme Court."

The president's gray brows rushed together.

"It must never get so far," he snapped. "Understand that right now, Mr. Warner: it must never get so far. These socialistic green-horns and know-nothings at the capital are howling at what they call our cheap grade of rails—as if they could tell a rail from an air-brake! If that commission came into existence, the first thing it would do would be to stop our entire construction of the Conestoga Valley Branch, and the next would be a move to make us lay new rails along the entire main passenger-line. The cheaper rails have never yet been proved unsafe, and we've only just got over the bills for laying them."

"I see," said Warner, though he saw nothing.

"Exactly. So you will please to remember, Mr. Warner, that this road has a duty to the public to perform; that there are millions of dollars belonging to widows and orphans invested in it, and that we must, at whatever cost, prevent this sort of unskilled meddling and unconscionable blackmail—which, if we don't stop it, will reduce the January earnings by sixty per cent."

"As I say, Mr. Marbury, I'll do my best."

The great man rose, and Warner, at the signal, rose also. The big hand of the elder was laid heavily upon the shoulder of his employee.

"Mr. Warner," he concluded, "I suppose I should add to you that, in my private opinion, Mr. Gordon will never return from Florida alive. This case is your opportunity, young man."

Warner trod the clouds. He did not think of Gordon's death; he thought only of his own prospective elevation. Gordon would not come back; Cooper would be made General Counsel, and he, Joel Warner, would get Cooper's place. First

Assistant General Counsel—that meant a salary that was, in his eyes, affluence. He scarcely knew the once familiar hall, as he re-traversed it; when he passed the open door to Cooper's big, empty office, he could already see himself in the chair at its portentous desk; his entry into the little cell in which he had worked for a half-dozen years was the entry of a stranger into a repellent place.

There was a letter awaiting him. He opened it and found that it came from his old instructor, from former Judge Kittridge, for whom he had first worked as an office-boy and under whom he had later studied law. The good man was offering him a minor partnership. Warner smiled as he read it. He remembered how any sort of partnership with this man, whom he still revered and loved, had once been the star of his ambition. But now—now its "certainty of at least two thousand a year, with the chance of eight thousand by the time you are fifty"—how paltry the sums sounded!

Warner put that letter aside for answer with the rest of his correspondence next morning and turned to the matter of the Railway Commission Bill. He got the papers, notes, outlines and statutes referred to, from Gordon's safe, and attacked them as a starving man attacks unexpected food.

The lunch-hour passed without his noticing it; but by four o'clock he had secured a winning grip upon his subject. Gordon, he found, had worked well: the Act of 1870 might have been drawn with especial attention to the needs of a time that was gone; it might never have been enforced, even at that time; it might have ever since lain forgotten in the crowded limbo of our absurd legislation; but it had never been declared unconstitutional and had never been repealed. Warner found his victory prepared for him.

He had no time for more than a hasty toilet. He even indulged in the luxury of a taxi-cab through the falling snow to the dingy boarding-house on a side-street where he had an appointment. Soon he would own a car like Cooper's. Soon, he reflected; he would—

A tall, graceful woman came running into the meanly furnished parlor into



Joel saw that the burden was Jean

which he had been shown—a woman of thirty, with a broad, low forehead, coils of rich brown hair, and clear-seeing eyes of gray. A critical gaze would have noted in her a certain weariness, would have observed that her beauty had paused at its full flower before the fading that another year of hard work must bring it; but to Warner's gaze she was only the woman that had waited for him, and he took her into his arms.

"It's all over, Jean!" he cried, between laughter and tears. "It's all over! Rip up your notebook. Throw away your pencils. No typewriter-ribbon is going to stain your fingers any more!"

"You don't mean—" she began.

"I mean that this is all done with." He made a wide gesture encompassing the horsehair furniture, the crayon-portraits about them and the boarding-house variety of gas-light above their heads. "You're going to live in a house of your own," he said. "You're going to put away that jacket you've worn for three winters and have a sealskin, or whatever sort of fur's the right thing, from your little pink ears to your little black shoetops. You're going to throw it in the street if you don't like it, and get another; and you're going to have a new one next year, and a new one every year forever after. Jean Campbell, just as soon as you want, you're going to be Mrs. Joel Warner!"

She succeeded, now, in escaping from his gesturing arms, and, with one hand against her breast, looked at him, her body trembling, but her eyes once more calm.

"Is it Judge Kittridge?" she asked.

"No, it isn't. I had an offer from the good old soul to-day, but I mean to decline it to-morrow. He talks of two thousand a year. Two thousand! Why, we couldn't get along on that; we'd have to wait perhaps three years. No, my dear, you had better be respectful, for you are talking to the man that next spring is going to be First Assistant General Counsel to the G. P. & F."

He did not tell her all about it; but he told her as much as he thought he might tell without a betrayal of that "Office confidence" which he had been trained to respect so highly. They were to dine

with some friends in the suburbs, and, as they sat in the G. P. & F. train, bound thither, he finished his narrative with a look about the heavily crowded car, which seemed to anticipate part ownership.

Jean looked at him, smiling somewhat in amusement at his return to a forgotten boyish enthusiasm and somewhat in her joy that the return could be made, and in the cause of it all.

"Joel," she said, "do you know why I love you most?"

Warner laughed lightly.

"Because," he asked, "I am the luckiest man in the world?"

"No; because you are the bravest."

"Nonsense!" He liked it—he couldn't help liking it—but he felt that a deprecating dissent was the demand of a proper modesty. "I've never done a brave thing in my life."

She would not hear of that.

"Yes, you have," she insisted. "You are the bravest man in the world. Any other man would have been discouraged; any other man would have given up; any other man would have looked for a rich wife, Joel, during all these years that you just worked on and hoped on—or else any other man would have squandered his love, recklessly, casually."

"But you!" he returned. "Every word you say of me applies with more force to yourself. You had the chance of a better marriage—"

"Not a better."

"Well, what looked at the time like a richer, at any rate. And you didn't take it. You believed in me, and it was that made me whatever I was that was worth while."

She shook her head.

"No," she said. "It was all there to begin with, born in you; and because it was I don't deserve any praise for loving it and waiting. You are brave—brave. That's the fine thing, Joel. That's the thing that makes me so sure I can depend on you, can put myself in your care forever and forever."

He did not at once answer, and Jean, her hand fast in her lover's beneath the skirt of his storm-coat, looked through a cleared spot on the frosted window, upon

what little the train's lights made visible of the rushing fields and fences beside the track. The snowfall had been light, but steady, and it now lay hard frozen upon the ground. Particles of ice blown from the car-roofs clattered musically against the pane. The telegraph-poles seemed to whip by with unwonted speed, and the coach rocked and swayed like a swift ship laboring in a running sea.

The car was filled to suffocation with commuters and shoppers homeward bound from their full day in town. On the seat in front of the lovers sat a grimy laborer, his tin bucket between his clay-stained knees. Beside him was a careworn woman with a baby whose cries began to silence all attempts at further talk. Men sat upon seat-arms and leaned against seat-backs, filling the aisles and trying to read the evening-papers by the twilight of the smoking lamps.

"I think," smiled Jean, returning her gaze to Joel, "that when you become president of this road you should put on more late-afternoon trains for suburban service."

"Certainly," said Warner. "Anything else? You've only to name it now, you know."

"Yes," she answered, "there is something else. They shouldn't run at such a terrific rate around these curves. There! They quite throw me into your arms."

"Oh, as to that," said Joel, "I can't see—Hello, here's another. And look here: that man's been tossed over!"

She looked. One of the commuters standing in the aisle had been flung to the floor.

"Why—" she began.

But she did not finish.

There was a sound as if the curtain of Heaven had been ripped from horizon to horizon; a roar as if the stars were falling to the earth. The car, seemingly wrenched from its fellows, shot away at a tangent, lurched, fell upon its side. There was sudden darkness, and, out of the darkness, shrieks and crushing struggle and stabbing pain.

All that Warner knew was panic. At one moment he had been riding in a lighted train curveting through space like an uncontrolled aeroplane. At the next,

in a black night, he was lying on a snow-drift with a weight of timbers across his chest and the reverberation as of many waters in his ears. His sole impulse was the primal impulse of self-preservation.

He braced both hands against the weight across his breast, and shoved—shoved madly, till he thought his back would snap. The weight gave, and he leaped up, trembling.

"Joel!" He heard the voice from somewhere near his feet, but he could not heed it. "Joel!—Joel!"

He cast a single, wild look at the indistinct wreckage before him, and then, blinded by the sight, he turned, regardless of everything but the terror within him and ran—through the snow—ran panting and stumbling through the snow—anywhere to get away.

He ran until he dropped exhausted, against a fence, and leaned there, each breath a stab.

Gradually he discovered that he had described a half-circle and was again facing, though at a greater distance, the wreck. Gradually he made out that, from this distance, there came, across the snow, a tumult of agony punctured by brief, quick, authoritative cries. Gradually he was aware of dancing spots of light that must be the yellow lanterns of the surviving train-crew. And then, not gradually, but in a horrid mental flash that seemed actually to illuminate the material darkness about him, he thought of Jean.

"Jean!" he gasped, and, with empty arms outstretched, ran headlong back to the wreck.

He came upon a mass of splintered timber, and iron that was bent like so much lead. In the jumping lights borne by the trainmen he caught ugly glimpses of silent human figures, lying very still; of fragments of clothing and fragments of flesh; of forms so twisted and broken and torn as to appear never to have been human. Here and there among the moving lanterns he saw red stains upon the snow.

A brakeman hurried shouting by, an ax in one hand.

Joel hurried after the man, fell over a heap of car-seats, rose, jumped forward

and clutched the brakeman's arm. Warner thrust his face close to that of his captive.

"Where is she?" he yelled above the engulfing clamor.

But the brakeman shook him off as if he were a petulant child. He reeled and struck against a panting man, who bore in his arms a burden. Somebody dashed by with a torch, and as its flare fell upon that which the panting man carried, Joel saw that the burden was Jean. Her face was white and set and upon her forehead there was a slight cut that, to Warner's eyes, gaped as wide and as red as a fatal wound.

"Jean!" he shrieked.

She opened her eyes. Even at that crisis they were calm.

"Put me down, please," she said to him that carried her. "There were boards across my ankle. They held me. But it's only a slight sprain. Go and look after the others."

Joel flung his arms about her, but she drew away and sank to a piece of wreckage, still addressing the man that had saved her.

"Thank you," she said. "I'm all right—truly."

Joel turned toward the man. He recognized in the rescuer the grimy laborer that had sat directly ahead of them. The man's face was now completely blackened, but he was at once to be identified by the remnants of his overalls and the tin lunch-bucket that, with its handle tossed high over its owner's forearm, had grotesquely hung there throughout the horror.

The man had plainly been stunned and had made this rescue through a series of actions almost automatic. He stood now looking straight before him with vacant eyes.

"It was them cheap rails!" he said. "It was them damn' cheap rails. They was a loose joint, an' the engine climbed it. I knowed this'd happen sometime."

"Are you hurt?" asked Jean.

"It was them rails," persisted the laborer. "Don't I ought to know? I helped lay 'em. We all knowed. We all looked fer it. An' the company, it knowed it was takin' chances, too."

"Are you hurt?" persisted Jean, trying to rise, and twisting her lips in pain. "Joel, see if he's hurt."

The enveloping racket, the shock of losing and now of finding her, and, at last, the dim comprehension of what the laborer was saying—these things had brought his brain to a standstill. Only her words animated him.

"But you—" he began bending solicitously toward her. "Jean, are you sure—?"

"I'm quite sure that I'm all right. You take care of this man." Her voice bore authority.

Warner obeyed. He led the laborer to a knot of people near by—some trainmen, a sweating surgeon and many wounded and a few dead passengers. Jean's rescuer was unhurt but kept babbling of the cheap rails; and a man on a blanket—the engineer, with a bloody bandage about his head—confirmed the babbling.

"He's right," said the engineer. "I've been expectin' this ever since them rails was re-laid."

Warner, returning to Jean, found several of the crew helping her into a farm-wagon that had been impressed as an ambulance. She leaned over the side when he called her, and he saw her face still unaccountably calm.

"They are driving us to town," she said.

"Has the surgeon seen you?"

"Yes. It is only a sprained ankle."

"But I—"

"This is for the wounded only. I can help here. Perhaps"—she nodded to the spot whence he had come—"perhaps you can help there."

Joel bit his lip. She was right, and he knew it.

"Of course," he said. "I'll do what I can. And may I see you to-morrow?"

She regarded him wonderingly.

"If you think it worth while," she answered.

Warner bowed his head. Even then the horror of the wreck was too strong upon him to permit of a realization of any change in her relation to him. He had run away from her when she called for his help; but he had forgotten that. In the

terror of what he had afterwards seen, the recollection of his panic was indecipherable: the blot of the disaster of others—still more, the sense of what caused that disaster, of where the responsibility rested, of what this must mean to his whole career—covered all previous action from intelligent sight.

It was that cheap rail which ripped into his own brain as the night progressed. He labored among the broken cars until the last mutilated body was removed. He worked until the wreck-crew arrived. He carried the dead and bandaged the wounded until a pale dawn shivered in the east. But, under the groans that hurt his ears and the sharp orders that he obeyed mechanically, there ran ever, in accusing obbligation, the words of the laborer:

"It was them cheap rails!"

He breakfasted in the terminal restaurant and went at once to his office. There he brought out the papers that he had, the day before, worked so hard over, and there again he scrutinized their every line.

Doubt was impossible. The company's case was so clear that any novice could have handled it. The establishment of a State Railway Commission would be in direct violation of the forgotten, unenforced, but never repealed Act of 1870.

But something else was certain, too. The proposed Commission was the idea of the political newcomers. These were opposed to the method of construction and management of the G. P. & F. Marbury had many pairs of ears in the lobby of the capital, and Marbury had said that the newcomers intended the Commission as a lever to raise the rails of the G. P. & F.—the new rails that had caused the wreck.

The issue was clear. Joel Warner had only to plead a ready-made, surely winning cause; he had only to plead a cause that was legally certain to be won by some one else even in the event of his refusing it—he had only to do this to be made the First Assistant General Counsel of the G. P. & F. Or he had only to give up the case, to give up, with it, this chance of unhopèd-for advancement, to give up even his present position, to give

up, at least for years, the woman he had loved and waited for so long.

Warner made the papers into a careful pile and took up the telephone.

"Mr. Lovett?" he inquired.

"Mr. Lovett," purred the president's private secretary.

"This is Mr. Warner. I want to see Mr. Marbury. Has he come in?"

There was a minute's pause. Then Lovett made answer:

"You are to come right up, Mr. Warner."

Joel traversed the hall, stepped into the elevator and finally entered again the big, well-lighted, much be-furnished room where just as yesterday, the big, round, chop-whiskered Daniel J. Marbury sat at his mahogany desk.

The president was gracious.

"Good morning," he said, his black eyes gleaming amiability. "I have just had a wire from Gordon."

"I hope he is better," said Joel.

"I am sorry to say that he is worse. Mr. Warner"—Marbury stroked his bulging white waistcoat—"the fact is, Gordon never would take proper care of himself; he overate. Wont you sit down?"

Warner sat down.

"Worse," continued the rotund Mr. Marbury. He crossed one thick knee over the other, grunting from the effort. "Worse," he said. "And, what's more, there is disconcerting news from Cooper. The doctors are talking about possible internal injuries."

Joel's compressed mouth tightened. He was familiar with accidental injuries now.

"Have a cigar," said Marbury, pushing the silver-bound box toward Joel.

"No, thank you," said Warner. He saw the surprise in the president's face; but he only laid his packet of papers on the arm of the desk and tapped them with a lean forefinger. "I've been over these," he said.

Marbury's bushy eyebrows raised to the low mass of his grey hair.

"The Railway Commission case, Mr. Warner?"

"Yes."

"How'd you find it?"

Joel looked straight into the other's eyes.

"I found it all right," he said. "It is so clear a case at law that anybody could present it and that even an antagonistic committee wouldn't dare to go against it. I shouldn't deserve credit for success."

Marbury smiled indulgently.

"You are too modest, Mr. Warner," he replied—"too modest by half."

"Nevertheless," pursued Joel, "there are one or two points that I'd like you to make clear to me before I discard my modesty. You said—" He hesitated, his lean face paler than usual; but he hesitated for a moment only. "You said," he concluded, "that these fellows were really after the G. P. & F."

"There's no manner of question about that."

"I see. And you said that the first thing they'd do would be to make us rip up our new cheap rails and lay better ones?"

Mr. Marbury's thicket of brows became a maze. What, in Heaven's name, was this threadbare young fellow driving at?

"Not better rails," he corrected, "but more expensive ones. Yes; they've said so in so many words; but what they don't know about railroads would fill a free library."

Warner looked at Marbury from the head down. He saw the complacent, strong face between its brief whiskers; he saw the double chin, the white chrysanthemum in the frock-coat, the spats and the bulging shoes. He was painfully conscious of his own inadequate figure, and a touch of red came into his face, just above its high cheek-bones.

"Mr. Marbury," he said, "this Commission is illegal; it can't under the present law, be created. But—I was in that wreck last night."

Marbury's face lost its usual serenity. It became clumsily solicitous.

"Indeed?" he asked. "I hadn't heard. I hope you weren't hurt?"

"No," said Joel. "I wasn't hurt—but some people were killed."

"Certainly. We're all terribly cut up about that."

"Not quite so much as they were, Mr.

Marbury. And I am told that the cause of the accident was one of our cheap rails."

Daniel J. Marbury's face glowed dully.

"Nonsense!" he declared. "Sensational newspaper talk! What do the papers know about practical railroading? Were you afraid this would hurt us in committee?"

"Nothing can hurt us in committee, Mr. Marbury, because the law is plainly with us. But the sources from which I got my information were expert."

Marbury's mind was adrift.

"What the devil are you trying to tell me?" he demanded.

It was the end. Ambition, wealth, even Jean must go. Joel fixed the president with his cold, blue glance.

"Simply this:" he said, "—that I can't take the case."

"What?" Marbury thundered the syllable, because he could not believe his ears. "Do you mean to say," he nearly shouted, "that you won't do as you're bidden?"

"That," said Warner quietly, "is precisely it."

Marbury gasped. His face was purple, and a pearl button, snapping from his waistcoat, fell with a clatter to the parquet-floor. In any other circumstances he would have hesitated not an instant to ring for Lovett to dismiss this madman; but the papers had indeed been talking; and it would not do for an attorney of the road to go away to be interviewed.

"Haven't you just said that our case was legal?" he cried.

"Not that it was right," said Joel.

"But then don't you know that somebody will win it for us if you don't?"

"Somebody will; but at least it sha'n't be I."

"What are you thinking of, Mr. Warner? Aren't you aware that we'll make adequate settlement for these lives that have unfortunately been lost? Aren't—"

"Adequate settlement, Mr. Marbury?"

"Don't interrupt, sir! Aren't you cognizant of the fact that we are a public concern with great public duties, with money invested by widows and orphans,



"I loved you all those long, long years, because I thought you were so brave"

which we mustn't jeopardize; and finally, don't you see what this course will cost *you*?"

"I see that," said Joel, "better than you suppose—better than you can. As for the widows and orphans, they would be, I fancy, the least sufferers; but they had better suffer than thrive on blood-money: there would be fewer new widows and orphans in the future." He rose and went to the door. "Good morning," he concluded. "I shall send up my resignation immediately."

Marbury tried to speak again; but the door, for the first time in his life, was shut upon his speech. He sent Lovett to overtake the fugitive; but before the secretary could accomplish that purpose, Warner, by a brief line of writing, had forever left the employ of the G. P. & F.

He walked out of the terminal and

trudged through the snow to the shabby boarding-house whither, only the evening before, he had been borne by a taxicab and bounding hope. He rang the loose-wired bell and was told by the slatternly maid that Jean, though not at her office, was well enough to be about the house. He saw her poor jacket hanging from the hat-rack in the dark hall; and in the parlor—where the daylight bitterly exhibited the horsehair furniture, the worn carpet, the crayon-portraits and the faded curtains—he waited.

She came in, reaching from the doorpost to a chair, with a limp that robbed her of her grace, but moved him to a new tenderness.

"Jean," he said; "you *are* all right, aren't you?"

Under the coils of brown hair, her forehead, broad and low, was calm; her

gray-clear eyes were steady; her mouth full and firm. And yet she looked very tired. Never before had he seen the years of working and waiting so registered upon her—and his own deliberate act had condemned her to a fresh sentence for his own conscience's sake.

He sprang toward her; but she waved him back. Warner came to a sudden pause before her, his face even whiter than common, his glance full of wonder.

"What is it?" he demanded. "What's wrong? What have I done?"

She sat facing him almost as a judge might sit. The condemned had become the magistrate.

"You can ask that?" she questioned.

Warner ran his long fingers through his scant hair.

"Who told you?" he demanded. "How could you know?"

"I was conscious all the time," she answered. "I saw you get to your feet beside me. I called you and I saw that you heard me call." Her voice lowered. "And then," she added, "I saw you run away."

Warner's hands took a quick grip upon his hair.

"You—you—Oh, it's *that*!"

His white face went red with shame. He dropped into the stiff chair opposite and put his hands before his eyes.

She looked at him, for a moment, in silence; and when she spoke, it was with an unrelenting pity.

"How could you do it?" she asked.

"How could you? It wasn't that I cared for myself. I would have been so glad to give my life for you. But I did care for my ideal of you. I cared more for that than for anything else in the world."

He did not look up, but his shoulders began to shake with dry, wrenching sobs.

"I know it," he whispered between his fingers, "I know that so well."

"I loved you," she went on monotonously. "I loved you all those long, long years, because I thought you were so brave, and then, when the test came, you failed me. When the test came you were only—" Her voice faltered but she pushed resolutely forward—"only a common coward, Joel."

She ended. For a slow minute he did

not reply. Then, drawing his handkerchief across his eyes, he met her steady gaze, his own wide with appeal.

"And so," he said, "you can't care for me again?"

"Oh," she smiled wanly, "I shall care. That's my punishment for *ever* caring for you—that I can't leave off now that I've seen the truth about you. It's become part of my life. It's grown into me. Yes, I shall keep right on caring."

Her tone convinced him of her words and convinced him of her justice.

He was crushing his handkerchief into a little ball between his damp palms.

"But not in the old way," he said.

She shook her brown head.

"No," he agreed from his heart; "of course you couldn't. I see that now. And to think—it shows how unworthy I am at the very core of me—to think that I should have been so full of other things as to have forgotten my own cowardice to you!"

"You forgot?" Her face hardened.

"Yes," he miserably confessed. "I forgot it. And so, of course, I couldn't ask you even to try to care for me again—sometime—to care in the old way."

She rose, painfully, holding fast to the chair, and he rose also, to take his dismissal.

"You forgot," she dully repeated. "Then it *is* over—all of it. I wish I could forgive you. I—" Her eyes filled. "I want to forgive you, Joel. I do forgive you what you did to me; but what you did to my ideal of you—I can't. I can't."

"No," he concurred. "I wouldn't ask that. There couldn't even be any chance to re-establish myself, any chance to prove—"

"That I was mistaken, that you had changed," she took him up. "No chance, Joel."

They faced each other in a third silence.

"You had better go now," she said. "Haven't you been to the terminal this morning?"

"Yes," he answered, moving by her. "I am through there, you know."

The wing of a new amazement brushed the curtain of her personal concern.

"Through there?" She remembered the promotion he had told her of, and she could not understand.

"Yes," he said. "It's Kittridge's partnership and two thousand a year for me now. And I had been so cruel and blind as to come here to ask you to begin waiting for me again!"

She drew back.

"But, Joel," she said, "I thought you were to be promoted."

"So I was."

"And to take the road's case before the legislature."

"Yes, But, you see, the legislature is after the G. P. & F. for its cheap rails—and last night's adventure showed me what those rails were."

Her gray eyes searched his uncomprehending soul.

"Joel," she cried—"and you gave it up?"

"Why, of course I did that," he said, simply.

"And you knew what it would mean to us?"

He dropped his head, guiltily.

"Yes," he said. "I even sacrificed, as I thought, you."

But Jean limped toward him. She flung her arms about his neck. Suddenly she had seen him whole again. That which had been lost was found. A stranger had instinctively rescued her body; her own lover had, by taking thought, discarded the world and raised her to his own level above it. Through the long night that she had been forging his cowardice, he had been welding his heroism.

"Brave!" she sobbed hysterically. "Brave for us both! Don't you see, you dear old goose? Don't you see that this is the courage that is bigger than any physical courage? You've been brave enough to put the right above even me. You ran away instinctively; but this last you did with your own hard thought."

She was kissing his bewildered eyes; kissing his tight, ascetic lips.

"Wait for you?" she cried. "I'll wait for you and slave for you a thousand years. You're the bravest man in all the world!"

The Fruit Shower in Room Three

BY FLORINE LEMING

ROOM Three was absorbed in study. The silence was broken only by the occasional screech of a slate pencil that faltered in its task, the muffled noise of books being opened and closed, and the slight clatter when some little girl with a sudden passion for cleanliness vigorously rubbed her smudgy slate with a dingy rag. Even the several small boys conspicuously occupying front seats were scrupulously industrious.

It was not a fervent desire for knowledge or an impending visit from supervisors that kept each pair of eyes averted, but fear—fear lest the Secret be discovered or suspected if even so much as a glance were exchanged across a narrow aisle. The atmosphere was charged with mystery. It was apparent in the crisp rustle of stiffly starched dresses and the

perked-up hair ribbons of various hues that looked like jaunty, crazily poised butterflies ready for flight. Even cherished top strings were left dangling from the over-flowing pockets of their owners without fear of loss. Obviously Room Three was laboring under an excitement that could not be suppressed much longer.

That is to say, all of Room Three save one diminutive unit whose desk was far down the inner aisle near the corner. In one pair of eyes there was no enthusiasm or brimming excitement. Elizabeth sat and stared at the board, waiting for the lump that always comes in one's throat when one wants to cry and can't. Even the knowledge that the last half-hour devoted to that daily nightmare, mental arithmetic, was approaching, did not urge

her to the customary feverish preparation. In her little breast the Secret lay like a leaden lump.

When the gong in the court outside finally announced the noon hour, the pupils of Miss Blake's room crammed books and slates into topsy-turvy desks and hastened forth with as much tumult as marching in line permits. Outside they surged across the sidewalk and overflowed into the street; small arms were linked to small arms and chalk-grimed fists were plunged into shallow pockets. Tommie Jones, swaggering along the curb, nonchalantly whistling between his teeth—serenely conscious of being the sole possessor of that accomplishment—was indignantly accused of "trying to give it away" by having surreptitiously drawn a picture of an apple on the black-board.

Bettie Harper, jumping up and down excitedly, cried: "And Mamma said I could bring two whole bunches of white grapes. Teachers just *love them*."

"Yes, 'n I'm goin' to bring a whole big pineapple, that cost fifteen cents, too," put in Jimmie Baldwin.

"Oh, wont Miss Blake be surprised! I am going to bring the yellowest, biggest banana you ever saw in your whole life!" caroled another little enthusiast.

Behind, mute and miserable, walked Elizabeth. To her a fruit shower was a calamity. Some big and very wise person once said that Memory is the only Paradise out of which we cannot be driven, but unhappily all memories are not paradisaical. Elizabeth, just now, was thinking of the fruit shower last year; she remembered how she had had nothing to bring but several small apples and how she had polished them all the way to school until they were so red and shiny that only a burst of generosity had prevented her keeping at least one of them. She remembered how she had pushed her way through the bevy of little girls fluttering around the teacher's desk and placed them among the fruits already there, and how one of the older girls had said, contemptuously:

"Who ever brought these little old apples? Apples are so common anybody *knows* teachers don't like *them*."

She remembered, with another pang, how she had stumbled home after school, scarcely able to see for the big blurry tears, and hurled herself into her mother's arms to cry.

"Oh, mother, why do we have to be so poor, and not have things like other people?" Mother had left the sewing machine where she sat so much of the day and had taken Elizabeth into her arms and rocked her and told her long, when-I-was-a-little-girl stories and afterward played tea party with her out in the sandy yard. But clearest of all, she remembered how she had awakened in the night and heard her mother softly crying to herself and saying: "Oh, must my baby be hurt so soon, so soon!" And Elizabeth, lying in the dark, wide-eyed and silent, had somehow realized that fruit showers made mothers cry too, and had fervently prayed that there would never, never be any more fruit showers as long as she lived. Yet here was another! And this year, she knew there was not even an humiliating apple to be spared.

No actress ever concealed a breaking heart under the gay coquetry of foot-light smiles more successfully than Elizabeth hid hers during the bread-and-milk luncheon she and her mother shared from one end of the sewing-table. She prattled of the morning lessons, of the rubber snake Tommie Jones had flung in the aisle to frighten the little girls, of the story Miss Blake had read them, even performing the daily little rite of elaborately pretending to kiss each prick that roughened mother's "sewing finger." Through it all Elizabeth maintained a gay little face and at last reluctantly trudged back to school and the inevitable fruit shower.

Tip-toe with excitement, lest Miss Blake return before all the donations had been added to the clumsy pyramid of fruits upon her desk, the little girls in the room swooped down upon her with breathless cries of, "What did you bring, Elizabeth, what did you bring?"

Elizabeth, with her fists pushed down tightly into her apron pockets, faltered, "I—I didn't bring anything."

"Oh, Elizabeth, did you forget?" they reproached.

"No," she said in a tense little voice, "I didn't forget; I—I just couldn't bring anything, that's why."

"Oh, girls," shrilled a little girl whose donation of a huge yellow orange was still clasped in her hands, "Elizabeth's mother wouldn't let her bring anything. Wasn't that mean?"

At this juncture Miss Blake's approach was heralded by a quick scurry of feet outside, followed by breathless whispers, "she's come, she's come," and the children grouped themselves excitedly about the doorway to witness their teacher's surprise.

Miserable, self-conscious and altogether forgotten, Elizabeth sat in her seat swallowing very hard and winking very fast to keep the tears back. She watched the others swarm around Miss Blake, clutching at her hands, thrusting eager arms about her waist, pirouetting around her and giggling in an ecstasy of joy at the successful culmination of their surprise. She felt she had no right even to be listening to the exclamations of pleasure and delight the beloved Miss Blake uttered. She wondered how they could all laugh at the round, jack-o'-lantern, orange into which Tommie Jones had pushed currants for eyes and nose and that crazily topped the jumble of fruits. Over and over she kept saying to herself: "My mother isn't mean, my mother isn't mean; she's the best mother in the whole world."

All during the long afternoon Elizabeth endured those fruits arranged along the back of Miss Blake's desk. The sweet, cloying fragrance of Jimmie Baldwin's pineapple hung heavy on the air; the mellow odor of Elsie Bennett's huge banana filled her nostrils; a big, yellow, bumblebee blundered in and hung over Bettie Harper's bunches of grapes. Elizabeth had almost forgotten there was such good smelling fruit in the world; she wondered how she had ever had such fun last evening over the little dried apricot boats mother had set afloat in a thick yellow sea in her oatmeal bowl and how she ever had liked pretending the little black currants in the boats were men to be heartlessly pushed overboard with a spoon and later found at the bottom of

the sea. The coveted task of passing up and down the aisles sprinkling drops of water from the old catsup bottle with a hole in its tin top was, that day, a trial unspeakable. With downcast eyes and flushed cheeks she acted as monitor, feeling that her schoolmates' eyes were crying out as she passed: "You didn't bring anything, your mother wouldn't let you."

When school was finally dismissed Elizabeth lurked in the cloak-room till all the others had scampered off, then she trudged up the long street in the opposite direction from home until she gained the crest of the sloping hill at the foot of which the village lay. Creeping into the shadowy haven made by a big, drooping, elm, she buried her face in the long grass and gave way to the tears of humiliation and self-pity that surged up from the depths of her little being.

Now, it chanced that on the other side of the tree, his back against its huge trunk, sat a young man. A pipe from which no smoke issued was gripped between his teeth and a cap was pulled tightly down over eyes that stared moodily across the landscape. Elizabeth, prone in the grass, was aware of nothing save the pounding of her heavy little heart and the throbbing of her temples.

The young man sat apparently oblivious to any presence but his own until at last there came creeping into his consciousness the sound of muffled sobs followed by long, tremulous sighs. Turning, then, he beheld a very flushed and disheveled little girl lying in the grass completely abandoned to her grief. He watched her silently for a moment murmuring, "Poor little kid, but it's *something* to be able to cry like that."

And then, conjured up by the subtle necromancy of sound and environment, there came to him a memory of a little lad lying in the grass beneath just such a tree, shaken with sobs just as the mite of humanity beyond him was. He could see another quiet little village at the foot of a hill, quiet on all days save that one, when the distant blare of a band rent the air. After all the years he was still pitying the little fellow who had lain in the grass sobbing because he had been

forbidden to go to the circus. And the hard lines about his mouth returned when he remembered that the father who had forbidden his going that day was the same stern parent who was now determined to blot out all the bright, alluring future for that same little lad grown tall. Or rather who wasn't going to blot it out, he thought.

Pocketing his pipe, he arose and went over to Elizabeth, whose sobs were slowly quieting, and with the friendly concern lovers of children reveal by a word, said:

"Well, well, what makes a pretty little girl in a pretty pink dress cry like all this?"

Elizabeth, flushed and tear-stained, sat up and regarded him with surprise. She gravely accepted the handkerchief he casually offered, and a moment later, as if his slight ministration had somehow established a bond of sympathy between them, she was telling him with the frankness children sometimes show, her sorry little story. Punctuated by occasional big tears, her faltering tale conveyed to him all the grief and humiliation the day had held and by the time it was concluded Elizabeth was encircled by a big, strong arm and was being patted by a hand that knew how to pat almost as well as mother's.

"And why," queried her comforter, who evidently didn't understand about not even having apples sometimes, "didn't you ask mother for something to take as the other little girls did?"

"I couldn't." And this time because of the friendly brown eyes and the comforting arm, she was not ashamed. "I couldn't, because you see there wasn't anything to take—not even any apples. I didn't tell mother because she would be sorry too, and when mothers are sorry they smile and smile when it's day-time and then they wake up in the middle of the night and cry all by themselves," she gravely added.

"I thought of running away from school but it's always the boys who can run away, somehow, so I just went back—on account of mother," she finished.

"I see," said the young man, quite simply, and looked away.

Minutes passed and the two sat

wrapped in the languorous silence of late afternoon until at last the westering sun, creeping softly up the slope discovered a very small girl asleep in the sudden peace of spent emotions, and a young man who carefully held his position lest he disturb the tumbled little figure beside him.

His eyes were fixed on the purple calm of distance, but many scenes not in the landscape were before him. He was seeing again the gloomy library at his home and his father, marching up and down the room with lowering brows and sneering lips, uttering scornful remarks about ninnies who wanted to waste their years daubing silly paints on worthless canvas when there was a man's work waiting to be done in the world, or about "idlers who lounge through their days mooning over sunsets and fields of worthless daisies when the country about them is crying for men with red blood in their veins."

The scene slipped past with kaleidoscopic swiftness and then he saw his father's clanking, roaring, factory, the noises of which had been in his ears almost since his birth. He saw the red glow of furnaces burning through the night like angry, throbbing wounds, the hideous blotch of buildings against the rose and pearl of early dawn, the glimmering iridescence of streams polluted with reeking oil. All his life the factory had hung over him like a Nemesis. He closed his eyes and could hear the clank and roar and rasping friction of the machines that were to have been his heritage. Were to have been, because he had left it all, once and forever. There had been a few tense moments when father and son had defied each other, every drop of kinship in their veins consumed with smoldering wrath and resentment; and after that the son had flung himself from the room and hastily packed his bag. There had been a brief sad instant when, on the stairs, he had stooped to kiss his mother. Then he had hurled himself from the parental doors forever.

Elizabeth's tousled head stirred against his arm. He remembered she had said: "I thought of running away, but it's always the boys who can run away some-

how." And suddenly with swift inner vision there was revealed to him all his mother's life had been, its long years of patience and endurance through which had stalked that grim human machine, his father. There came swift memories of nights where, as a child, he had cried himself to sleep over stern punishments and later had been awakened by his mother's kiss on his tear-stained face.

"It's only boys who can run away."

His mother had stayed. All those long years she had stayed and endured his father's tyranny, perhaps because of him, her son. And now that son had forsaken her.

"And when mothers are sorry they smile and smile in the day-time and then in the middle of the night they wake up and cry all by themselves."

He saw his mother sitting on the porch behind the wistaria blooms, a bit of sewing in her frail fingers and a faint smile with just a hint of sadness on her lips; he saw her, later, seated at the dinner table behind the ponderous coffee urn, presiding with gentle grace and the same faint smile; and then it was dark, but he could still see her lying white, among her snowy pillows. The smile was gone. A pale moonbeam stole up the counterpane until it rested on her slender, blue veined hand that after so many years was

needed no longer to soothe and caress. And her soft mother eyes were filled with silent tears.

"So I just went back on account of mother."

The child's words sounded in his ears again and quite clearly he realized that he should go back, too, "on account of mother."

The sun dropped lower and lower, taking with it his impetuous hopes for Europe and art and study. On the horizon a lowering, jagged cloud bank had formed. How like the factory it looked! But, somehow, the amber after-glow was softening and transmuting it with light till it seemed not half so ugly.

As the first cool breaths of evening stirred the grasses on the hillside, a man and a little girl walked hand in hand down the slope. And so complex is the scheme of life, the gray-haired mother who knelt long at her window that night praying for her son's return would never know that the suffering of a little child had served to turn him back; and another mother, yearning over a little tear-stained face, could detect thereon only the traces of some childish sorrow and would never know how many weeks and months of suffering another mother had been spared through her little one's grief of a summer day.

The Count Guy

Solid Ivory Accomplishes Another Coup

BY JOHN A. MOROSO

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT EDWARDS

LIEUTENANT TIERNEY of the Central Office staff was napping over a thrilling detective serial in an afternoon paper when Jimmie Dunn, the desk man, tapped him on the shoulder.

Tierney's eyelids rolled up slowly.

He stared into the clear, cold eyes of Jimmie.

"Huh?" he inquired, stupidly.

"Wake up, Tierney," ordered Jimmie.

"The inspector wants to see you. It's a big job."

Tierney shivered. He didn't want any big job. He was afraid of falling down and spoiling a reputation made on a single case when he was working in the Oak street station and known among the men as "Solid Ivory."

"What's up?" he asked Dunn, eagerly and anxiously. "Tip me off, wont you?"

"Robbery at the grand opera," Dunn replied. "But don't sit there looking like a bonehead. The boss is in a bad humor to-night."

Tierney left the little waiting-room of the detectives, just off the larger room where the folding frames of the Rogues' Gallery made the wainscoting. He crossed in front of Dunn's brass-railed desk and entered the office of the inspector in charge of the secret service of New York City.

"Sit down," growled McCafferty.

Solid Ivory half fainted into a chair.

"Yes, sir," he said, weakly.

McCafferty continued reading a letter before him, signed it, and picked up another.

"Mrs. Van Dusen has been robbed at the opera," he told Tierney, as he continued with the work before him. "Mrs. De Witt Austen was robbed there last week. Others have been robbed all this season."

He signed another letter and put it aside.

"Yes, sir," said Tierney.

"Some of the stuff was paste, but most of it was real," resumed McCafferty, unheeding Tierney's feeble assent and continuing with his work. "But the Van Dusen robbery is a big one. Every diamond and pearl was real."

Tierney twitched in his chair.

The inspector signed another letter.

"Some new and very clever thief is getting all this good loot," resumed McCafferty. "At first we thought they were inside jobs, done in their homes, but we have looked up that end of it and find that the business is the work of an outsider. See?"

Tierney perked his red head on one side, like an attentive but uncomprehending parrot.

"Yes, sir," he replied.

"We have Johnny Reagan—the famous Johnny Reagan—on duty in the Golden Horse Shōe," added the inspector, sneeringly, "but he has become an opera critic. He is far too elegant for our business. He can be bunked by anybody who talks music to him."

Tierney stared stupidly at the toe of one of his long, flat brogans. He mis-

trusted this task before him. He knew of Reagan and knew that he was the most elegant and frabjous detective that ever carried a shield under a dress-coat. He felt reasonably sure that if this assignment compelled him to doll up he would make of himself the laughing stock of the five hundred and more plain-clothes men who were envious of him for his sudden and accidental success.

The inspector continued to read and sign his letters.

"Well?" he inquired finally, looking up at Tierney's freckled face and red hair.

"What did the dame lose?" Tierney asked, with a sudden burst of inspiration and courage. "Just what was it exactly, that she missed from her kick?"

"They don't carry their diamonds to the opera in their kicks, as a rule," replied the inspector with a smile.

"Was it a ta-ra-ra?" asked Tierney, to show that he was wise to the world of fashion.

"It was a stomacher," the inspector informed him.

"A what?"

"A stomacher."

"What's that, Chief?"

McCafferty laughed.

"A stomacher," he explained, "is a sort of plaster made of diamonds. It is worn where you or I would wear a plaster if we had the stomach ache. Mrs. Van Dusen is a fat lady and I imagine that her stomacher contained many diamonds, pearls and other precious stones."

"Haw!" came from Tierney.

This was too funny to be real.

The idea of a woman plastering herself with diamonds startled his remote sense of humor.

He covered his mouth with a big, red hand in an effort to suppress his merriment.

The chief was making a note in a little book. Tierney knew that it was a memo' of his assignment.

"I'll have Reagan report to you tomorrow, Tierney," he said. "He will take orders from you. Don't let him bunk you just because you are raw. If you have any trouble with him, call him



"Some smear, Reagan," he said

down, and if that doesn't work, call me up."

Tierney pulled himself from his chair. "Here is an order for \$150 expense money," added the chief, handing him a slip of paper he had signed. "Spend whatever is necessary and keep tab of your account. But get your man, Tierney. Here is a regular job for you. Go to it. Make good. Good-night."

II

"No, mother," said Tierney, faintly, for he was weak from his efforts to get a high collar buttoned about a very short and very thick neck. "I'm not going to any run-around. I aint in the dancing set—that is, not yet."

"Praised be the Name!" exclaimed the patient old woman, "but ye're beautiful, me bye."

"It must be grand," Tierney assured

the old mother, "for it hurts like hell at me gullet and yet somehow I feel grand. How do the two tails of me dress-coat look?"

"They're both on the level," she told him, "just like me son."

The bell of the Tierney flat rang.

"It's Johnny Reagan," said Solid Ivory. "Let him in, mother—the brat."

Mrs. Tierney pressed the button and in a few moments Mr. Reagan, attired with an elegance and grace that warranted his alias of "Grand Opera Johnny," appeared at the door.

"Mr. Tierney, please," said Mr. Reagan, with some condescension.

"He's expectin' you," replied Mrs. Tierney. "Ye'll find him in the kitchen choking down a bottle of beer."

Mr. Reagan swept through the little flat to the rear.

Mr. Tierney liked the beer from the neck of the bottle, and he was experi-

encing great difficulty in gulping it with such a collar surrounding his throat.

He stopped in the operation and regarded Mr. Reagan with admiration.

Mr. Reagan, sylph-like in the fit of his opera clothes, a silver tipped cane playing between his fingers, and a light overcoat slung in cavalier fashion over his shoulders, stood awaiting orders from this raw man who would struggle with a bottle of beer while dressed as a gentleman. He did not like it at all.

Mr. Tierney finally found his voice.

"Some smear, Reagan," he said with a wave of one hand to his own regalia.

Mr. Reagan nodded.

"Will they let me in without flashing my badge?" he asked.

"You'll pass," Reagan replied.

"Say, Reagan," exclaimed Tierney with a grin, "how do you get into these things?" He held up a pair of white, kid gloves. "They aint big enough for a Chinese baby."

Reagan knew nothing of the task before Solid Ivory and he did not want him to pull off anything big over his head. He decided to nurse him along and find out what was doing. He showed Solid how to work his fingers into the gloves.

"What's it all about, old man?" he asked, innocently, as he labored to cram Tierney's fingers into the gloves.

"I dunno—yet," was Solid Ivory's cautious reply.

They put on their shining top-hats and left the kitchen. At the front door Tierney kissed the old mother good-by.

On the street a taxicab was waiting.

"What's the matter with the subway?" asked Solid Ivory.

Reagan laughed.

"Say, you can't be on a low-class job, Tierney," he protested. "You're going to mingle with wealth and fashion. The gum-shoe business don't go at the opera, y'know."

Tierney grunted and entered the taxi.

"You know the bunch up there—the rich guys, women and all?" he asked as they rattled uptown.

"Yes."

"Well, I might have to get a knock-down to Mrs. Van Dusen."

"What!"

"Yep; that's what the boss said for me to do, and his orders go with me."

"She's got a bunch of counts and such on for this evening," protested Reagan.

"That's all right," Tierney assured him. "What the boss says goes, anyhow—counts or kings."

Reagan lapsed into gloomy silence.

They pulled up to the Metropolitan in a long line of carriages and automobiles.

Caruso was to sing in "Tosca" with Scotti and Farrar in the cast. The Golden Horse Shoe would not only glitter, but it would glisten even as did the faces of angels seen in the dreams of the prophets of old.

"Say, listen," said Solid Ivory, as they began to mingle with the richly gowned women and their well groomed escorts. "Tip me as they come along to the Van Dusen box. Lemme know who they are as they go in. See?"

Reagan nodded.

They strolled to the promenade and loafed elegantly with the millionaires, the sons of millionaires and the title bearers.

III

Solid Ivory was studying the faces of the men who trooped up the grand stairway to the promenade of the Golden Horse Shoe—the white, tired faces of men weary of the pleasures of the wealthy.

Occasionally a pair of eyes would hold his attention. Again a brow that slanted suddenly would attract him and a young man without a chin and having only a slope of skin from under his teeth to the top of his high collar made him wonder at this particular form of human physiognomy.

Tierney had that sensing power which is known in the criminal world as "the know." The phrase has not gained wide circulation as yet. It describes, perhaps, a psychic force by which a thief instantly recognizes one of his own kind. A glance of the eye, a twitch of the lips, a turning back of the palms of the hands, a too flexible movement of the fingers, a too easy grace in greeting, a



As she walked, a skirt of satin made a slight rustling sound

poise of the whole body suggesting readiness for a signal of alarm—any of these things, or all of them together, make of the mind of the man with "the know" a receiving instrument for the wireless and unspoken message: "I'm a pal; stand by!"

Tierney had not bothered about the women. He had left to Reagan the spotting of Mrs. Van Dusen. He saw them generally and was impressed with only one thing about them, namely that they seemed to have left the better part of their clothes at home.

But suddenly one of quite another sort came into his vision as he lolled beside the elegant Mr. Reagan.

Something caught at the heart strings of Solid Ivory.

She was young and beautifully gowned. Her eyes were like two faint, gray stars. As she walked over the carpeted floor, a skirt of satin made a soft, rustling sound beneath its drapery of priceless lace.

Her hair was brown and her bare arms were slim as those of a child.

Tierney had never seen anything so beautiful.

"Who's the chicken?" he whispered hoarsely to Reagan.

"Emily Van Dusen. She's engaged to Count de Mobray," whispered Reagan in reply. "She's just out."

"Out of what—jail?" asked Tierney, amazed.

Reagan choked down the gorge of his disgust at such ignorance.

"Out in society," he hissed.

"The old woman's daughter?" asked Solid Ivory.

"Yes."

Solid heaved a sigh.

"She's a peach," he said.

"Beg pardon, my dear sir," Tierney heard some one saying at his elbow, "but could you direct me to the Van Dusen box?"

"Two doors to the left," he heard Reagan instruct the inquirer.

Tierney took a quick look at the man's face. The eyes, so near his own, showed a faint astigmatism; there was a slight droop to the lips and one eyelid seemed to hang a little lower than the other.

Tierney felt as if he had received a signal message: "I'm a pal; stand by!"

Tierney began picking his teeth.

"For God's sake, don't do that here!"

Reagan whispered.

Tierney dropped the sliver of wood and put a flat foot over it.

"Who was the gent?" he asked, unconcernedly.

"The Count de Mobray," replied Reagan.

"The Count guy what's going to marry the chicken?"

"You guessed right."

Toscanini's baton had fallen. The murmur of voices was stilled. Music crept softly into the air, such music as Tierney had never heard before. It was faint and far away.

"The opera has started," said Reagan, eager to get in one of the boxes where he could see and hear. "If you want to meet Mrs. Van Dusen, we had better start about it."

Solid Ivory was tempted for a moment. The thought of the beautiful "squab" he had seen drew him into temptation. He might stand or sit near her for the rest of the evening. It would be Heaven. He might even hear her speak. It would be paradise.

"I guess I'll be going, old man," he summoned up courage to say to Reagan. "My orders is to get back to the boss quick's I can. Good-night."

He turned, hurried down the grand stairway to the entrance and swung out into the night.

IV

Solid Ivory laboriously reasoned that if the Count de Mobray were a professional crook he had not operated on this side of the ocean for any great length of time. No man with a record familiar to the police would try for such big game so openly. And yet he had "sensed" this man as a criminal. To others he might appear the gentleman of title and all that sort of thing, but to Tierney he had those characteristics which, while they did not make for evidence in court, made for conviction in the mind of a man who had "the know."

He hurried to police headquarters and to the top floor thereof.

He found Faurot, the man in charge of the Bertillon system, hard at his task for the night. Faurot was peering through a magnifying glass at a finger print.

"Lieutenant," said Tierney, bursting in with all the glory of his regalia, "I want your help. The inspector says it will be all right. Just give me a few moments."

"Sure," grunted Faurot. "What is it?"

"I want to peek at the records of crooks on the other side who are not supposed to be operating here," explained Tierney. "I want those who work among the swells—the counts and dukes and kings, and all that."

Faurot had them all at hand. There were not many in the class Solid Ivory had specified. It took him but a moment to scan their brief histories.

"Now, say, Faurot," he asked as he finished this part of his task, "if I could get a thumb print of a guy without making him suspect I was after him and could bring it down here, you could check up the print, couldn't you? What?"

Faurot looked at him with surprise.

"Of course, I could," he exclaimed, "that's my business. But how are you going to get the thumb print of a crook without the crook knowing it? Are you going to perform a miracle? It will be some miracle if you manage that."

Tierney grunted and looked about as stupid as a recent station plain-clothes man could look.

"Thank you," he said, and was out of the room in a moment.

Downstairs he went with all haste and to the door of the inspector's room.

"What's it, Tierney?" asked the in-



Count de Mobray

spector. "I'm tired and want to get home and in bed."

"I got a suspect, boss," he said, with some difficulty, for his heart was beating like a trip-hammer and his collar was choking him.

"Already?"

"Yes, but I'm afraid I can't pinch him."

"Pick a fight with him and get him here for assault."

"It wouldn't do, boss. He's a count guy and he's going to marry the Van Dusen squab."

"The Count de Mobray?" inquired the inspector.

"He's my meat."

McCafferty was silent for a few moments. He feared a bungle that would put him in wrong with a new commissioner of police.

"What do you propose to do?" he asked, finally.

"If he is the crook I think he is, the Bertillon will show it," explained Tierney. "I want a man to follow him while I get his thumb print."

"While you get it," repeated McCafferty, ironically. "And can you get the thumb print of a high class crook so very easily?"

"I'm going to try, sir."

"Go slow, Tierney," warned the inspector. "If you muss up a job like this it will mean that the whole bunch of us will be sent hiking to the wilds of the Bronx. Go slow. Tell Dunn to give you the best man he has at hand."

"Good-night, boss," said Tierney, meekly, as he moved to the door.

At the threshold he paused and looked back. The inspector was laughing.

"Guess it's these glad rags that make him chuckle," Tierney told himself as he closed the door behind him.

V

Solid Ivory got the best man that Jimmie Dunn had at his beck and told him to hustle to the Metropolitan and not to leave the tracks of the Count.

The shadow hurried away and Tierney left the building. Glancing up and down Mulberry street, as if getting his bearings, he headed for Spring street. He saw a green and red light shining in a window and made his way to an Italian drug-store. He asked the clerk for some pure white paraffin. He was given a little cake. He briskly rubbed the back of the white glove on his right hand with the wax tablet. The friction melted the wax and soon the back of the glove was coated with an almost invisible layer of the wax. With his left hand he paid the drug clerk a nickel and then hurried from the place.

His right hand hung by his side as if atrophied as he dived into the subway station at Bleecker street and took an uptown train.

On the surface again, at Times Square, he proceeded to a small saloon on Seventh Avenue. Here he called for a glass of whiskey.

"I want bar whiskey," he told the barkeeper.

A bottle and a glass were placed before him. He filled the glass and choked down the vile stuff. The fumes of that drink would linger on his breath for two hours, but to make sure of his purpose he took another big drink, paid with his left hand and passed out of the place. He turned east and, making Broadway, hurried into the opera house.

He found Reagan on the promenade. He breathed hard as he made the last stair and Reagan drew back from him.

"My God, Tierney," cried Grand Opera Johnny, "you've been drinking. Your breath is awful. This is no place for you."

"It's all ri', old man," replied Solid Ivory. "Don't worry. I'll keep quiet."

His voice was unsteady and his eyes were sparkling.

"A souse on my hands," groaned Reagan.

A burst of applause from the audience told them that the act was ended.

The occupants of the boxes along the Golden Horse Shoe began to pay their customary opera calls. There was a bustling of maids and opening of doors.

A group of men, laughing and chatting, formed on the promenade, and started for a door guarded by a liveried attendant.

"Where they going?" asked Solid Ivory, drunkenly and stupidly.

"To the Metropolitan Opera Club," Reagan informed him. "The box-holders have a room where they may drink and smoke between the acts."

Tierney saw Count de Mobray join the group and enter the club-room.

"Come along," said Tierney. "We'll go in there, too."

"But you're soused," pleaded Reagan.

"My orders," replied Tierney, thickly, but concisely.

Reagan led the way. He had *carte blanche*.

As they entered the room, a waiter was pouring champagne at a little round table about which were gathered de Mobray and his friends. Tierney saw the Count remove his right glove, the better to handle his glass and his cigarette. He maneuvered so that the Count faced him.

De Mobray was extending his un-

gloved hand to take his glass of wine, when Tierney lurched forward, grasped the hand and, with swaying body and an unholy odor of whiskey on his breath, began to shake it with drunken effusiveness.

"Damned glad to see you again, ol' fellow," Tierney muttered. "Whe-whe-where you been thesh daysh?"

The count released his hand as soon as possible and drew away from the intruder.

Tierney looked up with watery eyes.

"Oh, 'taint Johnson," he mumbled. "Sorry. 'Scuse me, old man."

He braced himself with an effort, looked about the room and turned away from the table.

Solid Ivory walked with such grotesque stiffness of gait to the door that the count and his friends burst into laughter.

Reagan hurried to him, caught him by the arm and almost hurled him out of the room.

Tierney still staggered and still exhaled the odor of bad whiskey as he bade Reagan good-night. Then he walked carefully down the grand

stairway, waved an adieu to the disgusted picture of elegance at the head of the stairs and reeled into Broadway.

He hurried to the subway station at Times Square as no drunken man could have hurried; and all the while he carried his right hand stiffly before him, guarding it carefully with his left.

Three times he was jostled on the platform, but the glance he gave those who pushed him was sufficient—as warning.

VI

Tierney reached headquarters at half-past ten.

"Where's the inspector?" he asked of Jimmie Dunn.

"In bed," was the laconic reply.

"Wake him up and tell him I have the man's finger prints."

Dunn looked at him suspiciously.

"What's ailing you?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied Solid Ivory.

"It seems I smell something," said Jimmie, sniffing.

Tierney remembered the hard liquor he had taken with a well-defined purpose and sense of duty.

"Wake him up," he gasped. His collar was choking him brutally.

"Suppose you try that," suggested Dunn. "He's a hyena when he's woke up."

Tierney, still holding his right hand stiffly before him, turned from the desk and darted into the corridor. In a few moments he was on the top floor.

"I got it," he exclaimed as he disturbed Faurot for the second time.

"Got what?" asked Faurot, suspiciously, as he caught a whiff of the cheap whiskey.

"The finger prints."

He extended his right hand, now almost paralyzed from inaction.

"It's in wax on this glove," he said to Faurot. "Can you take it from that?"

"I hope so," was the answer.

Faurot reached into his desk and pulled out a little box of black powder



He carried his right hand stiffly before him

and a brush with hairs as silken as the hairs on the head of a young child.

He dipped the brush into the powder and whisked it over the wax-coated glove.

"Steady, and nearer the light," directed Faurot.

The brush was applied again, swiftly and gently. Then, under their eyes, the white glove became black save for a myriad of little white circles, ellipsoids and darting straight lines.

"Splendid!" cried Faurot, at last.

He was immersed in his work. Beads of perspiration stood on the brow of Solid Ivory.

Faurot looked at him with admiration.

"I'll photograph it first," he cried. "Your nerve might give out. Your hand is trembling."

"Don't worry about that nerve," replied Tierney. "Wipe the sweat off me face. Me handkerchief is in the right-hand hind pocket of these dude pants."

Faurot swabbed the brow of Solid Ivory and then took him to the photographic department and in a few moments the record of the blackened glove was on a plate.

Once again at Faurot's desk, with Solid Ivory weak and trembling from this exertion of keeping one hand stiff for two hours, Faurot decided to remove the glove.

Tierney felt as if he could drop in his tracks and give up the job.

"I'm going to cut off the glove," said Faurot. "Don't shrink if the knife reaches your hide."

Solid Ivory wagged his head.

His fingers were bleeding when Faurot lifted the glove from his hand.

"Now, then," said Faurot, "I'll check it up."

The prints of the fingers of the

"swell" crooks who had not operated on this side of the ocean were again disclosed.

Tierney watched the Bertillon expert compare his glove record with divers other photographic records.

"Lake formed ridge," he heard Faurot say to himself as he worked.

The eye of the man shone with the interest he had in his work.

"Ridge bifurcates."

Tierney saw him shift his glass from one of the photographic records to his glove.

"Terminus of ridge."

Faurot chuckled as if with the delight of the chase.

"Inner terminus—point of the core."

Tierney heard it all as gibberish.

"Vertical ridges inside of circle."

Faurot dropped his glass and turned on Tierney.

"By gad, you're a wonder," the Bertillon man exclaimed. "You've got a good one. He is Maurice Malheur and it *was* a 'bad hour' when you started after him."

At midnight the Count de Mobray had an old-fashioned but strong sort of bracelet about his right wrist as he walked on the left of Tierney of the Central Office.

But the face of Solid Ivory did not shine with the triumph his achievement might have merited. He knew that he would have the praise of his chief the next day, but ambitious thoughts were not in his mind. Rather, his thoughts were of a sweet, young girl who, on the morrow, would be hurt and shamed and broken-hearted—a girl with eyes like two faint, gray stars.

"Poor little squab," he muttered as he turned from Jimmie Dunn's desk to start homeward, "poor little squab!"

A Bush League Hero

BY
EDNA FERBER

Author of "Dawn O'Hara," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY IRMA DEREMEAUX



Rudie

THIS is not a baseball story. The grandstand does not rise as one man and shout itself hoarse with joy. There isn't a three-bagger in the entire three thousand words, and nobody is carried home on the shoulders of the crowd. For that sort of thing you need not squander fifteen cents on your favorite magazine. The modest sum of one cent will make you the possessor of a Pink 'Un. There you will find the season's games handled in masterly fashion by a six-best-seller artist, an expert mathematician, and an original-slang humorist. No mere short story dub may hope to compete with these.

In the old days, before the gentry of the ring had learned the wisdom of investing their winnings in solids instead of liquids, this used to be a favorite conundrum: When is a prize-fighter not a prize-fighter?

Chorus: When he is tending bar.

I rise to ask you Brothah Fan, when is a ball player not a ball player? Above

the storm of facetious replies I shout the answer:

When he's a shoe clerk.

Any man who can look handsome in a dirty baseball suit is an Adonis. There is something about the baggy pants, and the Micawber-shaped collar, and the skull-fitting cap, and the foot or so of tan, or blue, or pink undershirt sleeve sticking out at the arms, that just naturally kills a man's best points. Then too, a baseball suit requires so much in the matter of leg. Therefore, when I say that Rudie Schlachweiler was a dream even in his baseball uniform, with a dirty brown streak right up the side of his pants where he had slid for base, you may know that the girls camped on the grounds during the season.

During the summer months our ball park is to us what the Grand Prix is to Paris, or Ascot is to London. What care we that Evers gets seven thousand a year (or is it a month?); or that Chicago's new South-side ball park seats thirty-five

thousand (or is it million?). Of what interest are such meager items compared with the knowledge that "Pug" Coulan, who plays short, goes with Undine Meyers, the girl up there in the eighth row, with the pink dress and the red roses on her hat? When "Pug" snatches a high one out of the firmament we yell with delight, and even as we yell we turn sideways to look up and see how Undine is taking it. Undine's shining eyes are fixed on "Pug," and he knows it, stoops to brush the dust off his dirt-begrimed baseball pants, takes an attitude of careless grace and misses the next play.

Our grand-stand seats almost two thousand, counting the boxes. But only the snobs, and the girls with new hats, sit in the boxes. Box seats are comfortable, it is true, and they cost only an additional ten cents, but we have come to consider them undemocratic, and unworthy of true fans. Mrs. Freddy Van Dyne, who spends her winters in Egypt and her summers at the ball park, comes out to the game every afternoon in her automobile, but she never occupies a box seat; so why should we? She perches up in the grand-stand with the rest of the enthusiasts, and when Kelly puts one over she stands up and clinches her fists, and waves her arms and shouts with the best of 'em. She has even been known to cry, "Good eye! Good eye!" when things were at fever heat. The only really *blasé* individual in the ball park is Willie Grimes, who peddles ice-cream cones. For that matter, I once saw Willie turn a languid head to pipe, in his thin voice, "Give 'em a dark one, Dutch! Give 'em a dark one!"

Well, that will do for the first dash of local color. Now for the story.

Ivy Keller came home June nineteenth from Miss Shont's select school for young ladies. By June twenty-first she was bored limp. You could hardly see the plaits of her white tailored shirt-waist for fraternity pins and secret society emblems, and her bed-room was ablaze with college banners and pennants to such an extent that the maid gave notice every Thursday—which was upstairs cleaning day.

For two weeks after her return Ivy

spent most of her time writing letters and waiting for them, and reading the classics on the front porch, dressed in a middy blouse and a blue skirt, with her hair done in a curly Greek effect like the girls on the covers of the *Ladies' Magazine*. She posed against the canyas bosom of the porch chair with one foot under her, the other swinging free, showing a tempting thing in beaded slipper, silk stocking, and what the story writers call "slim ankle."

On the second Saturday after her return her father came home for dinner at noon found her deep in Volume Two of "*Les Misérables*."

"Whew! This is a scorcher!" he exclaimed, and dropped down on a wicker chair next to Ivy. Ivy looked at her father with languid interest, and smiled a daughterly smile. Ivy's father was an insurance man, alderman of his ward, president of the Civic Improvement club, member of five lodges, and an habitual delegate. It generally was he who introduced distinguished guests who spoke at the opera house on Decoration Day. He called Mrs. Keller "Mother," and he wasn't above noticing the fit of a gown on a pretty feminine figure. He thought Ivy was an expurgated edition of Lillian Russell, Madame De Stael, and Mrs. Pankhurst.

"Aren't you feeling well, Ivy?" he asked. "Looking a little pale. It's the heat, I suppose. Gosh! Something smells good. Run in and tell Mother I'm here."

Ivy kept one slender finger between the leaves of her book. "I'm perfectly well," she replied. "That must be beef-steak and onions. Ugh!" And she shuddered, and went indoors.

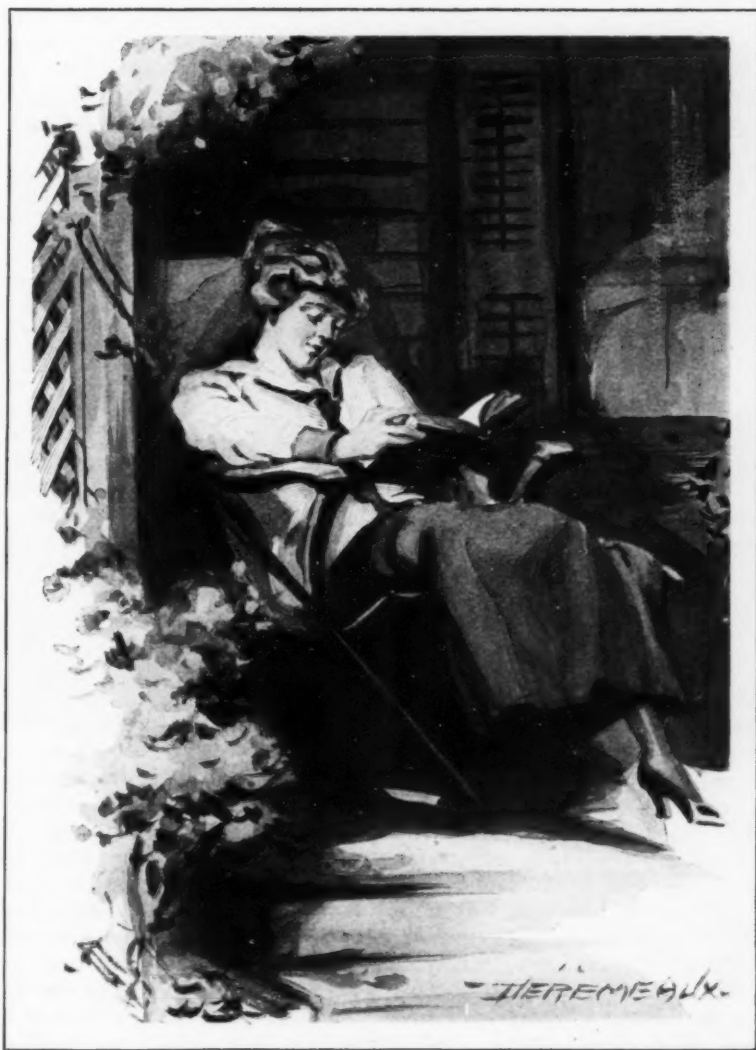
Dad Keller looked after her thoughtfully. Then he went in, washed his hands, and sat down at table with Ivy and her mother.

"Just a sliver for me," said Ivy, "and no onions."

Her father put down his knife and fork, cleared his throat, and spake, thus:

"You get on your hat and meet me at the 2:45 inter-urban. You're going to the ball game with me."

"Ball game!" repeated Ivy. "I? But I'd—"



Ivy spent most of her time reading the classics on the front porch

"Yes, you do," interrupted her father. "You've been moping around here looking a cross between Saint Cecilia and Little Eva long enough. I don't care if you don't know a spitball from a fade-away when you see it. You'll be out in the air all afternoon, and there'll be some excitement. All the girls go. You'll like it. They're playing Marshalltown."

Ivy went, looking the sacrificial lamb. Five minutes after the game was called she pointed one tapering white finger

in the direction of the pitcher's mound.

"Who's that?" she asked.

"Pitcher," explained Papa Keller, laconically. Then, patiently: "He throws the ball."

"Oh," said Ivy. "What did you say his name was?"

"I didn't say. But it's Rudie Schlachweiler. The boys call him Dutch. Kind of a pet, Dutch is."

"Rudie Schlachweiler!" murmured Ivy, dreamily. "What a strong name!"

"Want some peanuts?" inquired her father.

"Does one eat peanuts at a ball game?"

"It aint hardly legal if you don't," Pa Keller assured her.

"Two sacks," said Ivy. "Papa, why do they call it a diamond, and what are those brown bags at the corners, and what does it count if you hit the ball, and why do they rub their hands in the dust and then—er—spit on them, and what salary does a pitcher get, and why does the red-haired man on the other side dance around like that between the second and third brown bag, and doesn't a pitcher do anything but pitch, and wh—?"

"You're on," said papa.

After that Ivy didn't miss a game during all the time that the team played in the home town. She went without a new hat, and didn't care whether *Jean Valjean* got away with the goods or not, and forgot whether you played third hand high or low in bridge. She even became chummy with Undine Meyers, who wasn't her kind of a girl at all. Undine was thin in a voluptuous kind of way, if such a paradox can be, and she had red lips, and a roving eye, and she ran around downtown without a hat more than was strictly necessary. But Undine and Ivy had two subjects in common. They were baseball and love. It is queer how the limelight will make heroes of us all.

Now "Pug" Coulan, who was red-haired, and had shoulders like an ox, and arms that hung down to his knees, like those of an orang-outang, slaughtered beeves at the Chicago stockyards in winter. In the summer he slaughtered hearts. He wore mustard colored shirts that matched his hair, and his baseball stockings generally had a rip in them somewhere, but when he was on the diamond we were almost ashamed to look at Undine, so wholly did her heart shine in her eyes.

Now, we'll have just another dash or two of local color. In a small town the chances for hero worship are few. If it weren't for the traveling men our girls wouldn't know whether stripes or checks

were the thing in gents' suitings. When the baseball season opened the girls swarmed on it. Those that didn't understand baseball pretended they did. When the team was out of town our form of greeting was changed from, "Good-morning!" or "Howdy-do!" to "What's the score?" Every night the results of the games throughout the league were posted up on the blackboard in front of Schlager's hardware store, and to see the way in which the crowd stood around it, and streamed across the street toward it, you'd have thought they were giving away gas stoves and hammock couches.

Going home in the street car after the game the girls used to gaze adoringly at the dirty faces of their sweat-begrimed heroes, and then they'd rush home, have supper, change their dresses, do their hair, and rush downtown past the Parker hotel to mail their letters. The baseball boys boarded over at the Griggs House, which is third-class, but they used their toothpicks, and held the post-mortem of the day's game out in front of the Parker Hotel, which is our leading hostelry. The postoffice receipts record for our town was broken during the months of June, July, and August.

Mrs. Freddy Van Dyne started the trouble by having the team over to dinner, "Pug" Coulan and all. After all, why not? No foreign and impecunious princes penetrate as far inland as our town. They get only as far as New York, or Newport, where they are gobbled up by many-moneyed matrons. If Mrs. Freddy Van Dyne found the supply of available lions limited, why should she not try to content herself with a jackal or so?

Ivy was asked. Until then she had contented herself with gazing at her hero. She had become such a hardened baseball fan that she followed the game with a score card, accurately jotting down every play, and keeping her watch open on her knee.

She sat next to Rudie at dinner. Before she had nibbled her second salted almond, Ivy Keller and Rudie Schlachweiler understood each other. Rudie illustrated certain plays by drawing lines on the table-cloth with his knife



"Ivy, I don't like that ball player coming here to see you"

and Ivy gazed, wide-eyed, and allowed her soup to grow cold.

The first night that Rudie called, Pa Keller thought it a great joke. He sat out on the porch with Rudie and Ivy and talked baseball, and got up to show Rudie how he could have got the goat of that Keokuk catcher if only he had tried one of his famous open-faced throws. Rudie looked politely interested, and laughed in all the right places. But Ivy didn't need to pretend. Rudie Schlachweiler spelled baseball to her. She did not think of her caller as a good-looking young man in a blue serge suit and a white shirtwaist. Even as he sat there she saw him as a blond god standing on the pitcher's mound, with the scars of battle on his baseball pants, his left foot placed in front of him at right angles with his right foot, his gaze fixed on first base in a cunning effort to deceive the man at bat, in that favorite attitude of pitchers just before they get

ready to swing their left leg and h'ist one over.

The second time that Rudie called, Ma Keller said:

"Ivy, I don't like that ball player coming here to see you. The neighbors'll talk."

The third time Rudie called, Pa Keller said: "What's that guy doing here again?"

The fourth time Rudie called, Pa Keller and Ma Keller said, in unison: "This thing has got to stop."

But it didn't. It had had too good a start. For the rest of the season Ivy met her knight of the sphere around the corner. Theirs was a walking courtship. They used to roam up as far as the State road, and down as far as the river, and Rudie would fain have talked of love, but Ivy talked of baseball.

"Darling," Rudie would murmur, pressing Ivy's arm closer, "when did you first begin to care?"

"Why I liked the very first game I saw when Dad—"

"I mean, when did you first begin to care for me?"

"Oh! When you put three men out in that game with Marshalltown when the teams were tied in the eighth inning. Remember? Say, Rudie dear, what was the matter with your arm to-day? You let three men walk, and Albia's weakest hitter got a home run out of you."

"Oh, forget baseball for a minute, Ivy! Let's talk about something else. Let's talk about—us."

"Us? Well, you're baseball, aren't you?" retorted Ivy. "And if you are, I am. Did you notice the way that Ottumwa man pitched yesterday? He didn't do any acting for the grand-stand. He didn't reach up above his head, and wrap his right shoulder with his left toe, and swing his arm three times and then throw seven inches outside the plate. He just took the ball in his hand, looked at it curiously for a moment, and fired it—*zing!*—like that, over the plate. I'd get that ball if I were you."

"Isn't this a grand night?" murmured Rudie.

"But they didn't have a hitter in the bunch," went on Ivy. "And not a man in the team could run. That's why they're tail-enders. Just the same, that man on the mound was a wizard, and if he had one decent player to give him some support—"

Well, the thing came to a climax. One evening, two weeks before the close of the season, Ivy put on her hat and announced that she was going downtown to mail her letters.

"Mail your letters in the daytime," growled Papa Keller.

"I didn't have time to-day," answered Ivy. "It was a thirteen inning game, and it lasted until six o'clock."

It was then that Papa Keller banged the heavy fist of decision down on the library table.

"This thing's got to stop!" he thundered. "I wont have any girl of mine running the streets with a ball player, understand? Now you quit seeing this seventy-five-dollars-a-month bush leaguer or leave this house. I mean it."

"All right," said Ivy, with a white-hot calm. "I'll leave. I can make the grandest kind of angel-food with marshmallow icing, and you know yourself my fudges can't be equaled. He'll be playing in the major leagues in three years. Why just yesterday there was a strange man at the game—a city man, you could tell by his hat-band, and the way his clothes were cut. He stayed through the whole game, and never took his eyes off Rudie. I just know he was a scout for the Cubs."

"Probably a hardware drummer, or a fellow that Schlachweiler owes money to."

Ivy began to pin on her hat. A scared look leaped into Papa Keller's eyes. He looked a little old, too, and drawn, at that minute. He stretched forth a rather tremulous hand.

"Ivy—girl," he said.

"What?" snapped Ivy.

"Your old father's just talking for your own good. You're breaking your ma's heart. You and me have been good pals, haven't we?"

"Yes," said Ivy, grudgingly, and without looking up.

"Well now, look here. I've got a proposition to make to you. The season's over in two more weeks. The last week they play out of town. Then the boys'll come back for a week or so, just to hang around town and try to get used to the idea of leaving us. Then they'll scatter to take up their winter jobs—cutting ice, most of 'em," he added, grimly.

"Mr. Schlachweiler is employed in a large establishment in Slatersville, Ohio," said Ivy, with dignity. "He regards baseball as his profession, and he cannot do anything that would affect his pitching arm."

Pa Keller put on the *tremolo* stop and brought a misty look into his eyes.

"Ivy, you'll do one last thing for your old father, wont you?"

"Maybe," answered Ivy, coolly.

"Don't make that fellow any promises. Now wait a minute! Let me get through. I wont put any crimp in your plans. I wont speak to Schlachweiler. Promise you wont do anything rash until the ball season's over. Then we'll wait just one



Ivy began to pin on her hat

month, see? Till along about November. Then if you feel like you want to see him—"

"But how—"

"Hold on. You mustn't write to him, or see him, or let him write to you during that time, see? Then, if you feel the way you do now, I'll take you to Slatersville to see him. Now that's fair, aint it? Only don't let him know you're coming."

"M-m-m-yes," said Ivy.

"Shake hands on it." She did. Then she left the room with a rush, headed in

the direction of her own bed-room. Pa Keller treated himself to a prodigious wink and went out to the vegetable garden in search of Mother.

The team went out on the road, lost five games, won two, and came home in fourth place. For a week they lounged around the Parker Hotel and held up the street corners downtown, took many farewell drinks, then, slowly, by ones and twos, they left for the packing houses, freight depots, and gents' furnishing stores from whence they came.

October came in with a blaze of su-

mac and oak leaves. Ivy stayed home and learned to make veal loaf and apple pies. The worry lines around Pa Keller's face began to deepen. Ivy said that she didn't believe that she cared to go back to Miss Shont's select school for young ladies.

October thirty-first came.

"We'll take the eight-fifteen to-morrow," said her father to Ivy.

"All right," said Ivy.

"Do you know where he works?" asked he.

"No," answered Ivy.

"That's all right. I took the trouble to look him up last August."

The short November afternoon was drawing to its close (as our best talent would put it) when Ivy and her father walked along the streets of Slatersville. (I can't tell you what streets, because I don't know.) Pa Keller brought up before a narrow little shoe shop.

"Here we are," he said, and ushered Ivy in. A short, stout, proprietary figure approached them smiling a mercantile smile.

"What can I do for you?" he inquired.

Ivy's eyes searched the shop for a tall, golden-haired form in a soiled baseball suit.

"We'd like to see a gentleman named Schlachweiler—Rudolph Schlachweiler," said Pa Keller.

"Anything very special?" inquired the proprietor. "He's—rather busy just now. Wouldn't anybody else do? Of course, if—"

"No," growled Keller.

The boss turned. "Hi! Schlachweiler!" he bawled toward the rear of the dim little shop.

"Yessir," answered a muffled voice.

"Front!" yelled the boss, and withdrew to a safe listening distance.

A vaguely troubled look lurked in the depths of Ivy's eyes. From behind the partition of the rear of the shop emerged a tall figure. It was none other than our hero. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and he struggled into his coat as he came forward, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, hurriedly, and swallowing.

I have said that the shop was dim. Ivy and her father stood at one side,

their backs to the light. Rudie came forward, rubbing his hands together in the manner of clerks.

"Something in shoes?" he politely inquired.

Then he saw.

"Ivy!—ah—Miss Keller!" he exclaimed. Then, awkwardly: "Well, how-do, Mr. Keller. I certainly am glad to see you both. How's the old town? What are you doing in Slatersville?"

"Why—Ivy—" began Pa Keller, blunderingly.

But Ivy clutched his arm with a warning hand. The vaguely troubled look in her eyes had become wildly so.

"Schlachweiler!" shouted the voice of the boss. "Customers!" and he waved a hand in the direction of the fitting benches.

"All right, sir," answered Rudie. "Just a minute."

"Dad had to come on business," said Ivy, hurriedly. "And he brought me with him. I'm—I'm on my way to school in Cleveland, you know. Awfully glad to have seen you again. We must go. That lady wants her shoes, I'm sure, and your employer is glaring at us. Come, dad."

At the door she turned just in time to see Rudie removing the shoe from the pudgy foot of the fat lady customer.

We'll take a jump of six months. That brings us into the lap of April.

Pa Keller looked up from his evening paper. Ivy, home for the Easter vacation, was at the piano. Ma Keller was sewing.

Pa Keller cleared his throat. "I see by the paper," he announced, "that Schlachweiler's been sold to Des Moines. Too bad we lost him. He was a great little pitcher, but he played in bad luck. Whenever he was on the slab the boys seemed to give him poor support."

"Fudge!" exclaimed Ivy, continuing to play, but turning a spirited face toward her father. "What piffle! Whenever a player pitches rotten ball you'll always hear him howling about the support he didn't get. Schlachweiler was a bum pitcher. Anybody could hit him with a willow wand, on a windy day, with the sun in his eyes."



There was an unexpected plunge

The Heavenly Goats

BY MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

Author of "The Ten Cent Baby," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY B. CORY KILVERT

GIGI, wriggling down from his vantage on the fence, grasped his sister's hand.

"Giulia," he said, thoughtfully, "what you s'pose he means now by the sheeps an' the goats?"

Giulia had listened in silence to the itinerant preacher, and now she was industriously sucking a peppermint-stick while she viewed the dispersing crowd.

"He was just preachin', Gigi," she explained, removing the stick.

Gigi pursued his subject. "Giulia, do you s'pose they keeps all the sheeps in Heaven an' all the goats in Hell?"

"No! Aint you heard what he said?" she retorted scornfully, "he said they was sortin' out the sheeps and the goats, and the goats was goin' to Hell."

Her brother relapsed into painful silence. The two little Italians trudged

slowly away, stopping to look thoughtfully at the cows in the swamp. Gigi wore a pair of trousers so much too large that they had to be fastened well up under his arm-pits, and what remained below was sufficiently voluminous to make his thin, little, bare legs look like a turkey's. Giulia was older, but her pinafore had only one button and her skirt hung sideways from the overlapping of the belt.

Gigi sighed. "I'd lika go to Hell, Giulia," he said.

She promptly boxed his ears. He howled, thrusting his fist in his eyes. "I tella," he sobbed, "I'll tella Pape Popolizio!"

"You is a wicked boy!" said Giulia, indignantly, "you wanta go to Hell!"

"I wanta er goat!" screamed Gigi, "an' you says they goes to Hell."

Giulia was shocked. "I said they was sortin' 'em out in Heaven," she explained, "preacher said so."

"I wanta one!" Gigi sobbed, "I wanta er white goat an' er—er cart!"

"We aint rich enough to have no goats," said Giulia sadly, "an' we aint near good enough to have no sheeps."

Gigi persisted. "If they don't wanta no goats in Heaven," he wailed, "they might let me an' you have one—jest any old goat! But I—I likes 'em with whiskers!" he added, tearfully.

"So does I," Giulia agreed. "They looks jest like old Signor Pastore when he gives me candy."

The noonday whistle blew and the bells began to ring. She seized Gigi by the back of his trousers.

"Come on!" she cried. "Pape Popolizio will beata us an' there wont be any dinner any more!"

"I don't wanta no dinner!" screamed Gigi, "I wanta er goat 'fore it gits to Hell!"

"You wont get no dinner," said Giulia, dragging him, "an' what you do with a goat any way, Gigi?"

He suffered himself to be dragged, but he sobbed loudly. "I loves it an' I takes home washes! Mebbe I makes five centeses a week."

"There's ten washes outer the house anyway. I guess—" Giulia calculated roughly—"I guess we'd git mebbe twenty centeses for totin' 'em. My! Gigi, I wish we did have one goat!"

Gigi snuffled. "Aint it fierce, Giulia? When they's sendin' 'em all to Hell, too!"

She slackened her pace, still holding the recalcitrant.

"I don't know," she pondered, "mebbe we might git er scape-goat, Gigi."

"He said they was caught in the thicket," wailed her brother, "an' there aint no thicket on Grand Avenue!"

Giulia pulled him along again, but her small face began to assume an inspired look. "If they's sorting 'em in Heaven," she said, "they might put one in er thicket jest special for you and me, Gigi. They *might*. I aint sayin' they *would*."

Gigi gasped. "Who?"

"Sh!" She lowered her voice, her face grew grave. "The angels, Gigi."

He was a little awed. "Really, Giulia?"

She nodded.

"Where you think mebbe they'd leave it? In Pape Popolizio's bed, Giulia?"

"Oh, Gigi, he—he'd kill us!" she shuddered. "I'll ask real perlite not to have no goat in Pape's bed!"

"Mebbe they'd leave it at the perlice station!" suggested Gigi wildly.

"Then we wouldn't ever git it, Gigi," she said mournfully, "an' I guess mebbe, if it was for us anyway, it would be in er thicket and we'd be jest led to it."

Gigi sighed, rubbing his eyes. "I wish they knowed we wanted one so fierce, Giulia," he said.

They had crossed the railroad, and she pulled him forward. As they came in sight their grandfather began to shout Italian from the upper window.

"You, Giulia, you, Gigi! Come here quickly, now, or—" He cracked his fat hands together ominously.

His two American born grandchildren rushed pell-mell through the narrow alley between the houses and began to ascend the crazy, outside staircase to the upper tenement. They had to cross the flat roof of the lower story extension to a narrow door made of a window.

Pape Popolizio stood there with a stick in his hand. He was a short, fat, old man and his trousers, descending as he looms, enveloped Gigi in almost total eclipse. Pape gave each child a clip with his stick as they entered.

"Where then have you been?" he demanded. "Your father has eaten and gone to Guilford. There is polenta there in the pan. You'll go out to-morrow, you lazy rascals, and get greens or you'll eat nothing here."

Gigi began to eat his polenta, sobbing a little between the mouthfuls. Giulia went to the window-sill and filling Pape's old black pipe, brought it to him. As she held it out, her gentle, beautiful eyes pleaded. "May I have your pencil, Grandpapa?" she begged.

Pape gave it, growling. "Eat your dinner, or that little devil, Gigi, will leave nothing in the pan."

But Giulia could not eat; while Pape smoked on the roof she wrote a letter on the inside of a soap wrapper. Gigi got all the polenta, for, lost in the throes of composition, she took no heed of the inner woman. She rubbed out and wrote in, and she bit the end of her pencil. It is difficult to express your heart's desire, but, at last, the soap wrapper was fairly covered with curly-tailed letters and all the dinner was in Gigi's stomach. Then Giulia read her letter aloud.

Gigi listened in awe-stricken wonder, for she had written a letter to the blessed Madonna.

"Aint you going to burn a candle, Giulia?"

"We aint got one, Gigi," she said, sternly. "Besides, aint it perlite to write letters? Teacher says so. Now you read! This is just the same as a prayer only it's more respectfuller."

Deere Madonna, plese Mam!

When you iss soartin out the ghoats and the sheepses iff you don wants the ghoats will you plese giv one to Gigi and i? We wants one orful mutch. Youre respeckful littel Giulia.

iff you hass a orful lot of ghoats plese we woodent mind tu.

Gigi was too moved to speak.

Giulia folded it carefully and tied it with a green string. Then they set out together, creeping carefully past Pape Popolizio, who had fallen asleep. They tip-toed out the back gate and then ran, panting, to St. Patrick's. At the corner, Gigi plucked at Giulia's skirts.

"Aint you goin' to stamp it?" he whispered.



"Gigi!" she sobbed, "the—the goats!"

She paused and considered. "I aint got a stamp, Gigi," she said, at last, "an' I guess the Madonna knows it. I wrote on it that it was 'for Heaven,' and I guess it'll go—same as prayers do."

Gigi doubted. "Mebbe, mebbe it wont git there no ways."

The big, dark, stone church showed no lights, the iron railing looked forbidding, but the little Italian gathered her courage and ran up the steps and tucked the letter under the door. Gigi, on the sidewalk, gasped. Together they pattered home; they were frightened. After all, what would happen if—if the letter got to Heaven?

Morning dawned exquisite. Pape Popolizio wanted dandelion greens. His son, the father of the children, was working on the Guilford road; the wife was dead; and Pape, fat and rheumatic, cooked and watched the children. He hated his tasks exceedingly, but he performed them, advised, now and then, by Mona Lisa, the wife of the grocer next door. But, in the matter of greens, he had to rely on the children. He sent them

early into the country, with long knives, to gather dandelions and young poke. Giulia carried an old, stout piece of calico; when she had greens enough she would tie the ends together and walk home with the bundle on her head.

The two children trudged out Grand Avenue to the heights. The way is long and Gigi had to stop on the bridge to throw stones into the swift-running tide below, but at last they began to climb the steep path to the old quarry. The sweetness of Spring was in air; the oven bird called from the brush and the sheer side of the hill rose abruptly. The blackberry vines were in bloom, and, as they climbed, the children caught at the elders and the low sumach to keep their footing. The path is a mere foothold, and Gigi went first; once or twice Giulia stooped to cut poke. It was still, but for the oven bird.

"There aint a dandelion nowheres here," said Gigi.

Giulia did not reply; her quick ear caught the roll of a stone behind her. She looked back and saw something appearing on the path below. Something that sent a thrill of fear and wonder through her; she clutched at a young maple and clung to it, staring over her

shoulder. A Thing appeared, rose slowly above the edge of the hill and took shape before her eyes. It was white and shaggy and horned.

Giulia dropped to the earth with a shriek.

"Gigi," she sobbed, "the—the goats!"

There were, indeed, two white-bearded goats clambering calmly up the rocky path.

Giulia cried; joy and fear overwhelmed her.

"It's the goats, Gigi, our goats! *My letter went to Heaven!*"

"Catch 'em!" Gigi shrieked abruptly. "Catch 'em 'fore they start for Hell!"

Giulia rose wildly, but stood. "I—I'm scairt of 'em!" she sobbed.

It was then that Gigi, the brow-beaten, felt the glory of his sex. "I aint!" he said, but he, too, stood and looked.

So did the goats.

The leader had a rope around his neck and the end trailing. Giulia saw it. "He's got a rope on him, Gigi!" she cried.

Gigi approached boldly, though his heart quaked. He held out a propitiating hand; he had once owned a rooster. "Hi!" he said, "*poverino*, peep!"

The goat raised its head.

Gigi grew bolder, Giulia watched breathlessly.

"Peep!" said Gigi, "chick, chick!"

There was an unexpected plunge; Gigi was flung into the sumach and the goat reappeared and shook its head.

Giulia gave a cry of anger and alarm; her mothering instinct awoke; Gigi was her charge; she forgot herself and, falling abruptly on the goat, grabbed the rope end. The brute plunged for liberty and Giulia ascended the slope on her knees, dragging heav-



The goat saw daylight between Pape's legs

ily, but holding on. As she went she heard screams from Gigi.

"I've got him—I've got him!" he shrieked. "You hold on, Giulia, hold on tighta, very tighta!"

Giulia held.

At the top of the hill the goat stopped and viewed the situation.

Meanwhile, Gigi had thrown Giulia's calico over the head of the smaller beast and with his arms around its neck, the two were plunging along the path.

Giulia reached a propitiating bunch of greens towards her captive. He sniffed at them and, after a moment, accepted them. Then she rose and, fastening the rope to a sapling, went to her brother's rescue. A short, sharp struggle ensued. Then Giulia made a collar out of twisted calico for the goat's unwilling neck, and Gigi, flushed but victorious, led the more submissive beast. His sister returned to hers and, taking the rope, directed the descent to the road. They forgot their greens and panted down the road, wrestling with the miraculous animals. But, once in the street, the two goats trotted placidly; they even scorned electric cars; they assumed the manners of society.

Giulia began to breathe freely; she was happy; her goat led and Gigi's followed. Their pace was a little rapid, but the sooner they got home the better. The children had been silent; the event seemed to be too big for words, but Giulia got her breath.

"Gigi," she said, "they've both got whiskers."

He was deeply awed. "Did you ask for whiskers, Giulia?"

She considered. "Not out plain, Gigi, but—but I thought it real hard!"

"I aint got but one button any more on that suspend', Giulia," said Gigi, sadly.

"I'll sew it on good," said Giulia. "It aint any more to matter now we've got goats."

The strange procession trotted across the railroad tracks and drew nearer home.

"Gigi," said Giulia, "mine is to be called 'Giuseppe,' w h a t's yours?"

He ruminated; he was an observing child. "Lager Beer," he said.

"Oh, Gigi, that aint pretty!"

"It's my goat," he retorted stubbornly.

"I don't like it," she protested. "It aint nice."

"S'my goat!" said Gigi.

Mona Lisa looked out her door. "Gorgio!" she shrieked to

her husband, "Gorgio! Those Popolizio *bambinas* have got at last here two white billy-goats. *Ma chè!* It is as I say; Pape throws his money to the winds. It will be next an automobily on the roof!"

Gorgio emerged from the pickle barrel and wiped his hands. "It may be that they will eat goats."

"It may be that they will eat you!" she retorted scornfully. "One could boil that billy-goat two years and then it would resemble Signor Rascati's rack-steak!"

Meanwhile, Giulia and Gigi triumphantly shut the gate on their prizes. The yard was small and exceedingly dirty, but it would hold two goats. It was not large enough, however, as it proved, to hold two goats and Pape Popolizio. He followed them unexpectedly and encountered Giuseppe. The goat was not unprepared; he distinctly disliked the yard and he saw day-light between Pape's legs. He lowered his head, and the two rolled over in the mire. As they



She wrote a letter



The children stood sobbing

went the gate swung to, and, fairly trapped again, Giuseppe and Lager Beer fell on the fat, old man.

An hour later Giulia and Gigi were sobbing in the corner, supperless. Pape, trembling with rage, sat on the roof. It was too late to return the stolen goats to the hill that day, but he was ashamed.

"Always," he said, "always we have been honest—poor but honest—and now you, you, my son's children, are thieves, bandits! *Ma chè*, it is now a miracle that I do not feed you to the goats!"

Giulia and Gigi sobbed.

"If your father was not already in Guilford he would beat you both," continued Pape. "He will have no thieves here!"

"We aint thieves!" sobbed Giulia. "We prayed for goats to—to—"

"To kill your grandfather?" The indignant old man shook his cane at the culprits. "To kill your own grandfather?

Villains, reprobates, bandits, go to bed! In the morning it is I, Pape Popolizio, who will see that you pray these animals home. Not a word! To bed or—" he whirled his cane—"go!" he roared.

They went.

In the morning Giulia rose early, but she dared not look down into the yard at Giuseppe and Lager Beer. Her heart was broken, and Gigi had sobbed himself to sleep. Her dear goats, the goats that the Madonna had sent her! Giulia wiped a tear off her chin. She had just put some wood in the stove and Pape had suddenly appeared, half-dressed, when they heard some one on the outside staircase. Giulia

thrilled with agony; could it be Giuseppe? But the door on the roof opened and the tall figure of Mona Lisa stood revealed.

"*Buon giorno*, Pape Popolizio," she said in a tone of deep sarcasm. "It is, of course, a fine thing to keep goats, but it is immense to turn them into your neighbor's yard to eat his clothes! I will, therefore, thank you, Signor Popolizio, to remove your goats."

It was the last straw; it broke the camel's back.

"My goats?" cried Pape indignantly. "My goats indeed, and whose business is it if they are my goats? *Ma chè*, a man cannot live in this place!"

"Your goats, I say," retorted Mona Lisa wrathfully, "your goats! They tore down my fence in the night; they have devoured my husband's shirt off the line; there is nothing left save only the neckband and one button! They have eaten a can of tomato soup, and destroyed, ab-

solutely destroyed, devastated, my ash-barrel! It is a scandal to keep two billy-goats in your yard, Signor Popolizio!"

"And who says that they are mine?" he roared savagely. "Who blames me then for the damage? It is an outrage, a conspiracy, a—"

"Outrage indeed! Not your goats? Who else's then? *Chè, chè*, you will pay for Gorgio's shirt," said Mona Lisa firmly. "You will pay also for the can of soup and the ash-barrel—also for the fence where it is broken."

"I will leave this neighborhood!" shrieked Pape. "I will not live among such people. I will go into the country!"

"I have heard," she replied cuttingly, "that you originally lived in Cat's Alley; from what I have experienced I should so suppose!"

"Cat!" screamed Pape. "It is you should live in Cat's Alley!"

Mona Lisa went out and leaned over the balustrade.

"Gorgio, Gorgio!" she shouted. Then, receiving no reply, "It is fortunate for you that my husband is, at this moment, out, otherwise he would kill you!"

"That little rat!" shouted Pape derisively, and slammed the door in her face.

But Mona Lisa beat upon it. "I go," she shouted, "for Signor Flannigan. Then you will pay for the shirt, for the can and, also, for my feelings!"

An hour later a sad procession headed its way out Grand Avenue. In front walked Giuseppe, and Giulia, soaked in tears, held his rope. Next came Gigi leading Lager Beer, and last was Pape Popolizio, very fat, very hot and very mad. Behind trailed a long, and not unsympathetic, train of spectators.

"Gigi," whispered Giulia, faintly, "I aint daring to say what the Madonna'll think of Pape sendin' back her goats!"

Gigi sobbed. "I do-o-o-on't want Lager Beer to go to Hell!" he moaned.

Pape gave him a sudden prod between the shoulders. "Get on, Gigi mio," he said bitterly. "Am I to walk fifty kilometers yet for a goat?"

It seemed, indeed, many kilometers. The radiant sunshine glowed on Pape's head as he mopped it. The road ascend-

ed and still ascended. At the foot of the rocky hill he sat down.

"Where then did you get these creatures," he demanded, "these abominable goats?"

The children stood sobbing. Giuseppe and Lager Beer cropped grass.

Suddenly a man appeared, a well-dressed, calm, rather elderly man. He stopped and eyed the group.

"Signor," said Pape, in his difficult English, "eef you can informa me where dese goats do belong ad, I will immedeetely take dem dere."

"These goats are mine," said the stranger, "but—"

Pape rose; he almost embraced him. "Signor, dese liddle deevils, dese baggagees, my grandcheeldren, stole dem, bud dey meana no harm ad all; dey is crazy and desire de goats."

"Take 'em!" said the benevolent owner, "take 'em. I had them for my boy but he's gone to his grandmother's for the summer. They're infernal nuis— I say, wouldn't you kids like the goats?"

Giulia sobbed, looking sideways at Pape; Gigi bellowed, his fists in his eyes.

"Here, I say, take 'em!" The owner waved a liberal hand. "Take 'em; they're good goats. The big one is Teddy; he can eat anything, a back fence, a can, an old shoe, and—"

"He alraidy has eaten a shirt," said Pape, "bod—" He hesitated; he saw profit in two goats. "Bod eef I moves to de country nex' week, I—"

"Grandpa Popolizio," Giulia sobbed, "if you please, me an' Gigi an'—an' the Madonna wants the goats!"

The goat owner looked at Pape; Pape looked at him. "Wont cost you a cent," the stranger said blandly; he saw visions of a glorious release.

"I makes five centses on er wash," said Gigi suddenly.

Pape fell. "Signor, we—we thangs you," he said gracefully. "We rejoice to egcept de goats."

Giulia threw her arms around Gigi's neck.

"Gigi," she whispered, "I wrote again last night to the Madonna!"



Miss Shott having supplied the mothers with tea went after the daughters with chocolate

Euterpia Shott—Demonstrator

BY WALTER JONES

Author of "Vonnie Moline's Last Curtain," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT F. NORRIS

SHE can demonstrate anything from Morris-chairs to marmalade. Joe Cutler wouldn't recommend to me no girl that wasn't A-1. She's been with the Cutler Canneries two years now, and they got her from the Collapsible Furniture Co., of Grand Rapids, which she left solely 'cause she wanted to get into articles that are easier to handle. You might know what they think of her, seeing they're only willing to lend her to us for three weeks till we get a start at the demonstrating game. Besides, I seen the girl and she's the goods."

"Allan, I laid awake all last night

thinking about this proposition and it don't look good to me. We've always done a neat trade as it is. Why shouldn't we be satisfied to let well enough alone?"

"You make me sick, George. You aint got no more progress than a snail. You started in with thirty girls and there's only forty-two on the pay-roll to-day. We aint never grewed none, and how are we a-goin' to unless we advertise? Joe Cutler says, wher. we see how well this girl does in our home town, inside of six months we'll be having three or four on the road, holding down stands in the big city department-stores."

"Joe Cutler is a smooth talker; but never yet have I seen any use for women in business—"

"Nor anywhere else, either."

"And I believe, anyhow, we ought to let the matter go over another year till times are better. I'll write the Cutler people this morning—"

"You wont do nothing of the kind. Yesterday I wired as soon as you gave your consent and the lady'll be on hand to-morrow. It's a nice way you talk, George—enough to get a fellow off his nut, just when he's starting out with a hard line of trade to see, and new samples to talk up. We're going to give this thing a try-out, if it has to come out of my own pocket."

"Well, Allan, if you feel as strongly about it as all that, I sha'n't offer any further objections. But I'll tell you this: I'm not willing to have any frivolous young person passing out our crackers to street loafers and disgracing Pincus Brothers' name by scandalous conduct. I shall deal with her politely but firm."

"Oh, I guess you wont have any trouble getting along with *her*. But I must be off; my train leaves at twelve-ten. I'm going to wire back such a bunch of orders, George, that we can charge up any old demonstrator in the country to profit and loss and never feel it."

"You ought to. With the line you're taking out, you'd deserve to be canned if you didn't. Don't push those brandy wafers much till you get out of the county; but you can go it strong everywhere on the pink reception teas. Color'll get the women every time. Good-by, Allan. Two weeks from Friday I'll look for you in."

"So-long, George. Ship me a relay of them marshmallow thins to Tiffin and give my love to the new demonstrator."

The above conversation took place in the offices of Pincus Brothers, Biscuit Bakers, between Messrs. George and Allan Pincus, senior and junior members, respectively, of the firm. Both gentlemen were bachelors, George being some twelve years the elder. He had got his start in trade from his father who had kept a confectionery shop in the small Ohio city where the present factory was located. For years George had done a

tidy little business at a tidy little profit and was satisfied with that, until one day his brother grew up, took the place of the firm's sole superannuated traveling salesman, ventured into the world, and returned to partnership with new ideas in regard to advertising and expansion, to which the conversation just recorded bore witness.

II

The morning after his brother's departure, Mr. George Pincus was fidgeting before the desk in his private office, when his book-keeper appeared confusedly from an anteroom and announced a young lady. Mr. Pincus coughed, adjusted his cravat, and scowled nervously at the young lady in question as she entered.

"Good morning, madam," he said.

"Goodness," exclaimed his caller, with a grimace. "*Madam!* Do I look as old as all that?" Then she composed her features and her conversation and said, "Good-morning" pleasantly. She advanced across the room and extended a hand which Mr. Pincus shook without rising.

"Take a chair," he said.

As there was but one chair in the room and Mr. Pincus was sitting in that, the young lady took an arts-crafts ottoman.

"You have come, I presume," began Mr. Pincus, "on business connected with the temporary arrangement we contemplate in the matter of a demonstrator?"

"I should rather think so," replied the young lady affably. "After one look at your Main Street, I can't see why anybody that didn't have business here would ever come into *this* town."

Flippant, eh? Mr. Pincus saw that the worst was to be feared and gave his caller a look that he considered to be very stern. He would have been greatly surprised to know that she catalogued it as "helpless." For ten years the manufacturer had held no converse with a female other than to give an order to his house-keeper or to dismiss a shop-girl. He classified the gentler sex as angels or devils and admitted himself incompetent to deal with either—except in a business way. With a ready palate for a clever concoction of

sweetness and spice in a biscuit, he had no conception of a similar tantalizing admixture in a woman.

"With my brother and his friend, Mr. Cutler," he pursued, "you have doubtless gone over, somewhat, the character of the duties you are to assume with us. Am I so to understand?"

"You am," replied the young lady.

"With respect to terms. I have no criterion upon which to base—"

"Sixty-five flat for the period."

"Whew!"

"With car-fare, which your brother agreed to in Mr. Cutler's presence."

Mr. Pincus was about to utter a rather caustic objection, when it occurred to him that it might be just as well not to betray the extent to which his brother had acted without consulting him.

"I understood my brother fifty," he said dryly. "Have you ever demonstrated in our line before?"—with pointedness.

"No, sir, but if the berth is as soft as the biscuits, I ought to be able to get on the outside of it."

"When can you go to work?"

"I guess I'm on the job now," returned his caller.

As Mr. Pincus could see no relevancy in this remark, he suspected it to be insulting. Recourse to fists constituted his only known method of meeting an insult, and as this was impossible with a lady, he contented himself with scowling fiercely at the girl while she opened a shopping-bag and drew forth a card-case.

"Don't you think we'd better get acquainted," she asked, sociably presenting a pasteboard, "now that you've seen me and are satisfied?"

George Pincus gasped for breath. He had been deliberating how he might dismiss her instantly! He took the card; but, instead of looking at it, he looked at the girl. Hitherto he had considered her solely as a disturber of his business and personal equilibrium. Now he saw that she was younger than his house-keeper, better dressed than his best-dressed employee, and better looking than any woman has a right to be; the sum total of which impressions on their way to his brain centers became transferred to his

complexion, where they registered themselves in a vivid flush. He concealed his embarrassment over the card that read:

MISS EUTERPIA SHOTT
Demonstrator

"What's the matter that it takes you so long to read my name?" asked Miss Shott. "Is it the Terpy or the Shott? Euterpia was a rag-time goddess and you pronounce the Shott like it was spelled with a 'u.'"

Imparting this information, the new demonstrator took from her bag a pencil and a pad. "Now let's get down to business," she said. "I'll make a list of the things I'll need, so you can get them for me in time to move in in the morning. Where's this biscuit fight to be held?"

"I have secured space with our leading grocery firm, T. Fisher & Brother," said Mr. Pincus with dignity.

"'Brother' is good. Where there's a firm like that the brother generally makes a noise like an echo."

Mr. Pincus smiled involuntarily at the aptness with which this description fitted Mr. Adolphus Fisher, and then bit his lip into a pucker that should have shortened any man-fearing list by half-a-dozen items.

"Let me see," started off Miss Shott; "if it's a large grocery, they will have tables that'll do, or we can rig up packing-cases. Now, to begin with, I'll want two table-cloths, a couple of dozen napkins, cups and saucers ditto—"

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Pincus. "I presumed you were referring to a list from our own stock. You surely do not contemplate the serving of a beverage at our expense?"

"I sure do. Crackers without tea are like eating salt in a desert. But you needn't worry about it, for I've got the agent of a Ceylon tea company on the string that is only too glad to furnish the tea wherever I pass it out. Then, of course, I'll require a silver urn—one that'll hold a gallon."

"My dear young woman, there isn't one that size in the town; and if there was, I shouldn't think of—"

"So much the worse for the town. Nickel'll do; but I've got to have one. It's the only item that mounts up. The

other things your wife will let you bring from home, I've no doubt."

"I haven't a wife," growled Mr. Pincus, "and my house-keeper wouldn't—"

"Well, then, you can vouch me credit at a couple of stores, so I can buy the things this afternoon—that is, unless you'd like to go along."

"Certainly not. I—"

"A man *does* feel awkward shopping. And you'd better telephone the credit. A written O. K. might look rather queer in such a small town."

It was a good many years since Mr. Pincus had turned pink to his ears and a good many more since he had shifted so rapidly from rage to fright. Heavens! he thought, what if this person were a blackmailer! He became instantly uneasy about remaining longer in a room alone with her.

"Wouldn't you like to see the stock, Miss Shott?" he asked hastily.

"Certainly," she agreed. "It will help me to think up a color scheme, and then, you know, I always like to understand in the beginning whether the goods'll sell themselves or whether I've got to sell 'em."

He took her to the floor of the factory where the biscuits were coated, dried and packed. She traversed the aisles and inspected the workers with the air of a proprietress, whilst he was aware that every eye in the room was fixed on himself and his companion. Self-absorbed as he usually was, he knew the look that greeted a girl who had been promoted or a new girl who was prettier than the others. It was that look he now detected, not altogether with displeasure. If the firm must have a demonstrator, it was so much to its advantage to have a pretty one.

Miss Shott praised here, criticised there, and nibbled everywhere. "Your marshmallow thins are dee-licious!" she exclaimed. "They're a real novelty and ought to go strong with high-class trade, if handled right. But like all your wafers, they are done up too plain: you want to get a good grade of fancy paper and a few gross of colored ribbon for the choicer kinds. A woman'll buy a sawdust biscuit, if the box has a bow around

it. We could order a couple bolts of silk ribbon, half-inch, in white, and your girls could have some tied by to-morrow afternoon."

"I am short two girls now and haven't any that could be spared for such a—such an idiotic purpose."

"Too bad. I'll only put down one bolt and tie 'em myself in the morning. Now what is your judgment about pushing those pink reception teas? Do they sell here?"

"Yes, better here than—"

"As I thought. A jerk-water town where the papers don't print the live news on the pure-food laws, or the people wouldn't eat 'em on account of being afraid of the dye."

"Most unusual, most unusual," commented Mr. Pincus irrelevantly. It was the identical criticism returned with a box of the teas from a consignee who objected to their pinkness.

"Now," said Miss Shott, "I won't take any more of your time to-day. I like your line and am sure it will be a pleasure to work for you. You're not one of those stingy men that hold a girl down so she can't make a decent display of the stock. There's just one thing more to be understood: I wear white caps, suits and aprons; furnish my own and you do the laundering. I'll be in at seven-thirty in the morning, so you can take me over to T. Fisher's bright and early." She took a list from her bag and handed it to Mr. Pincus. "I've looked up a store or two where you can 'phone me credit. It's always well to be foresighted. I must scurry around now for that tea urn. Good-day, Mr. Pincus."

They had stepped back into the office. The new demonstrator gathered her shopping-bag in one hand, her skirts in the other, shot Mr. Pincus a bewitching smile, and hastened down the steps.

He sank into his chair limply. "I'll be damned," he muttered. "I'll be damned if I—" But he got up presently and went to the telephone.

III

One moment after Mr. Pincus had presented Miss Shott to Thaddeus Fish-

er, it became evident that the grocer considered demonstrators equally a novelty and a nuisance. The floor room he grudgingly placed at her disposal was some twenty feet from the door and consisted of about five feet on the dark side of the store, flanked on one hand by the coffee-mill and on the other by a chipped-beef cutter.

Miss Shott accepted the situation without comment, dismissed herself from the two men, and, with the aid of the delivery boy, set to work. In half-an-hour she had her wares displayed and the alcohol burner going under her tea urn. She had, furthermore, made an ally of the boy, who informed her that morning business consisted mostly of telephone trade until ten o'clock, when the "big bugs" began to buy in person.

That gave her two hours' time to make a "plant."

She removed her gingham work apron and stood revealed in a white crispness of raiment which she was quick to notice produced a devastating effect upon Mr. Adolphus Fisher. Miss Shott now went forth into the streets, sought a notion store in which she bought lead pencils, located a stationer's where she invested in a magazine or two, and returned by way of the bank to have several bills broken into change. Everywhere she left a trail of small talk and a gallery of faces at the window-panes. By noon, all the males and half the females in the downtown district had determined to investigate what was "doing" at Fisher's.

Thus did the mills of the biscuit gods begin to grind.

Mr. Pincus held himself aloof. Into the fastness of his office divers rumors were wafted and, daily, increasing supplies of wafers were sent down to T. Fisher's; but there came no word from Miss Shott and no cash. Mr. Pincus snapped his lips knowingly on the term "Results!" and shook his head. By Saturday he decided that the public had enjoyed enough free-lunch to gratify Allan's whim.

Saturday noon he appeared upon the scene with a carefully prepared speech which he immediately forgot in amazement at what he heard while waiting for

Miss Shott to finish a conversation with Mrs. Twillinger, the banker's wife.

"Oh, you understand," said the demonstrator, as she handed the lady a second cup of tea, "this demonstration is just a part of Pincus Brothers' extensive advertising policy. They realize that the quality of their goods isn't appreciated in their home town and have organized this display, I presume, purely out of native pride; although I must confess I have led them to believe that there might be a possibility of interesting a few discriminating local buyers like yourself. Two lumps?—yes, and the lemon. The Russians *do* know how to season their tea deliciously, don't they?"

Mr. Pincus grasped an Edam cheese for support while Mrs. Twillinger, who had always purchased her table supplies direct from Cleveland, ordered a half-a-dozen packages each of a half-dozen varieties and asked Miss Shott if she wouldn't like a ticket to "our Monday Morning Whist for Charity."

When her customer had left, Miss Shott drew a new brew and extended a cup of it to Mr. Pincus. "Have a cup of tea, do," she urged. "I've been looking for you down every day. It's been perfectly dear of you to trust me so absolutely. Most firms would have sent a daily representative in to bank the money; but it's been just as secure in Mr. Fisher's safe. I'll turn it over now, so you can deposit before the bank closes."

Wherewith she cashed in twenty dollars and eighty-five cents. "Not so wonderful for four days. But," she explained, "you must remember this is a demonstration, not a sale. I have them coming now, and we'll do vastly better next week."

"I am sure—er," Mr. Pincus stammered stiffly, "your receipts are very satisfactory."

Just then a lady of ample proportions jostled his elbow and spilled his tea, while another dived under his arm after a wafer. He beat a hasty retreat.

The money in Mr. Pincus' pocket jingled pleasantly on his way to the bank; in the afternoon it jingled pleasantly in his memory; by night he found that it would not dissociate itself from the person of Miss Shott. He wondered

how she might be doing; what methods she would employ to ensnare trade; finally it occurred to him that on Saturdays the Fisher emporium remained open until ten-thirty—an unconscionable hour for an unescorted female in Algeria City.

After some deliberation, he repaired to the store, where he hung around for half-an-hour, while the ordeal for which he had prepared himself became every moment more difficult. He fidgeted desperately as Miss Shott emptied her tea urn and approached her crimsonly as she removed her apron.

"Er—Miss Shott," he faltered, "eleven o'clock is a late hour for a lady to be alone upon our streets. It would put me to no inconvenience to escort you to your lodgings."

"I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Pincus," replied the demonstrator, dimpling in the direction of the younger Fisher, "but the Echo has beaten your time."

IV

Three circumstances of import characterized the second week of the Pincus Brothers' demonstration: instead of tea, Miss Shott served chocolate; Mr. George Pincus "took on" an extra girl to wrap packages; and the display at Fishers'



"What a ravishing display, Miss Shott!"

was moved into the front of the store.

Miss Shott, having captured the mothers of Algeria City with tea, went after the daughters with chocolate—so successfully that, almost any afternoon, had Mr. Pincus chanced to pass, he would have seen the grocery crowded with damsels drinking chocolate at five cents per cup, crackers unlimited, gratis; and, had he entered, he would have observed that most of the young ladies carried home marshmallow thins to digest with their favorite novels.

But Mr. Pincus didn't pass. He was busy at his office telephone, OK-ing Miss Shott's bills for ribbon and attending to her complaints that she wasn't being supplied rapidly enough with the stock. Purely as a means of protection against these interruptions, Mr. Pincus "took on" the extra girl.

As for the third circumstance, the demonstrator, from the moment of her entrance into T. Fisher's, had conducted a subtle campaign toward the large Main Street windows. She plied the Brothers Fisher with beverages and biscuits; she sympathized with Adolphus' bunions and Thaddeus' second wife's baby's measles; upon occasion, when business was brisk, she helped to fill orders, and finally she approached her proposition playfully.

"Mr. Fisher," she laughed, "in about another day that coffee-grinder's going to throw me into nervous prostration and I'll be coming back on you for my hospital bills. Those bushel baskets don't look very clever from the street. What do you say to my swapping places with them?"

Thaddeus bit off a toothpick and said it would put her in the way of customers.

"And perhaps, Mr. Fisher," she replied pointedly, "I've put you in the way of quite a few of those same customers. I've been told people are trading here now that never entered your store before the demonstration; they have bought wafers and made a purchase of you so as to have them delivered, and when they've liked your groceries, they've stuck. Isn't it up to you, Mr. Fisher?"

Mr. Fisher macerated another toothpick, choked on the splinters, coughed and said she'd have to wait till noon.

Next day Mr. Pincus heard of the change with a distinct feeling of delight in the prestige it accorded the firm. He would have liked to lend further distinction to the demonstration by dropping in now and then for a cup of chocolate; but, for some unaccountable reason, he always became embarrassed when addressing Miss Shott before strangers; then, too, he realized that an eligible bachelor can never be too circumspect.

Saturday morning, however, he sat in his office contemplating a visit to the grocery, when he should bank the week's profits and suggest to Miss Shott that she avail herself of a more suitable escort than Adolphus Fisher. The door opened suddenly and in walked Mr. Allan Pincus.

"Why!" exclaimed his brother. "What does this mean? You're a week ahead of time."

"It means," answered the junior partner glibly, "that I've covered my northern territory in two weeks. I always knew I could do it, if I hustled myself a little. How's everything? Demonstrator making good?"

"Under my direction," said Mr. Pincus crushingly, "she is now more nearly justifying her salary than at first. I am just going down to bank—"

"You needn't bother," broke in his brother blithely. "I'll just wash up a bit; then drop around and surprise her, and attend to that myself."

"But you've enough correspondence piled up to keep your stenographer busy for two days!"

"Never mind. It'll have to go over. Though you couldn't be expected to realize it, George, there's a lot of class to that girl—a lot of class."

In the face of further remonstrances, Mr. Allan Pincus performed hasty ablutions and hurried away. He did not appear again at the factory that day. It pained George Pincus in the purse to feel that his brother would neglect business for so trifling a cause as a woman. The book-keeper reported that Mr. Allan and Miss Shott had lunched at the hotel—which pained George Pincus in the sensibilities. He hoped that evening,

when Allan called upon the very estimable young person with whom he "kept company," she would upbraid him for having dined in public with another lady before coming to see her.

Altogether it was in a much perturbed frame of mind that the senior partner repaired to T. Fisher's about ten o'clock Saturday night. His mood was not tempered by the discovery that Miss Shott's table was spread over with manila papers and that she herself was nowhere about.

"Gone to the Elks' ball with your brother," volunteered T. Fisher. "Allan was in about half-an-hour ago and said for her to shut up shop, so they could get there in time for a couple of dances and refreshments."

The grocer returned Mr. Pincus' savage frown with a chuckle and glanced with cunning from him to Adolphus, who was despondently checking a consignment of canned peaches.

"The kid's cut you both out this time!" he said malevolently.

V

From the inside wall, illumined by a dirty skylight, to an eight-foot stand near the entrance door, was some progress; but Miss Shott, it seemed, was not satisfied. She told Mr. Allan Pincus that she wanted a show-window display—and she got it. For the last Saturday of her connection with Pincus Brothers there was moved into T. Fisher's large windows, fronting Main Street, a section of the finishing room of the factory, in charge of three of the prettiest employees, who sat all day filling and wrapping souvenir boxes of biscuits which were tossed into baskets and distributed to all comers. Miss Shott, from a station in the side-street window, did a brisk business in change and crackers.

Farmers began to hitch their vehicles on the public square at seven and by eleven o'clock a policeman was required to keep the crowd moving before the grocery's windows. Mr. Allan Pincus darted hither and thither amid the throng, smuggling wafers into unsuspecting pockets and collecting parties to make a tour of the factory.

Mr. George Pincus essayed no part in such melodramatic proceedings; yet when he sauntered down town about noon with a mien of cold disapproval, the sight that met his eyes compelled him to acknowledge that his demonstrator had inaugurated a red-letter day in the business annals of Algeria City. He felt that, in simple justice, the occasion demanded some expression of good-will on the part of the firm. In pursuance of this ultimate object, he made an immediate demand upon Miss Shott's private ear.

"Miss Shott," he said impressively, "I trust you have no engagements that will prevent my seeing you to your lodgings this evening."

"Why," hesitated Miss Shott, "I have; but it might be possible to break them for you, if you wish it."

Mr. Pincus blushed. "Not for me," he explained. "For the firm. I feel that the head of the firm should arrange a suitable interview to express appreciation of your services and—ah, perhaps to present certain proposals—"

"Oh," lapsed Miss Shott in a tone of very impersonal assent.

But it was, nevertheless, an assent; and so it happened that about ten-thirty that night when Miss Shott had taken leave of the Methodist church choir's soprano and the Ideal Millinery's head trimmer, when T. Fisher was chortling over a fat wad of sales-slips, when Allan Pincus was fingering a spark-plug and Adolphus Fisher was drawing on a pair of driving-gloves, the senior partner carried off the demonstrator under the very noses of the rival swains.

Mr. Pincus had never regarded himself with more complacency nor Miss Shott with more admiration than at the moment when he emerged from the grocery. Although never before had he played the gallant, he threw out boldly, "Possibly you would enjoy an ice-cream soda, Miss Shott?"

"I sure would," she agreed. "It was awful hot into Fisher's to-night. I could hop onto a couple."

They steered for the Chemical Drug Company's parlors where the city's aristocracy lingered about thin-legged tables.

As the boy filled their orders, he winked at the prescription clerk—whose laughing lips framed the words, "Pipe the skirt old Pinky's fell for!" The comment affected Mr. Pincus' sensitive ears unpleasantly.

Hardly had they devoted themselves to their chocolate sundaes when Mrs. Kilgour, president of the Daughters of Dorcas, stopped at their table. "Good evening, Mr. Pincus," she said; "Don't you think the band played perfectly splendid this evening? What a ravishing display, Miss Shott! They tell me you are leaving Monday. It's such a pity, the ladies thought of bringing your name up for the local corps." Then she added, with an arch smile—"We had hoped, Mr. Pincus, that you might persuade her to remain with us indefinitely." It was very embarrassing.

Scarcely had she passed on, when Jenny Doty, the Carnegie librarian, leaned over Miss Shott's chair and gave her disengaged hand a little squeeze.

"My dear," she cried, "don't you *dare* forget to return that Robert Chambers before you leave! But if you wont tell, I'll *smuggle* you something to read on the train. Mr. Pincus, I think you old biscuit brothers are perfectly *horrid* to let her go. She's the livest wire that's ever hit *this* town."

If Mr. Pincus hadn't been thrown into utter consternation, he might possibly have concluded that, for a librarian, Miss Doty was something of a live wire herself. His only idea, however, was to get out of the place. He was ashamed for his townspeople and afraid to speak to or look at Miss Shott, even when they had left the clamor of the public square behind and were sauntering down shady Maple Street toward her boarding-house.

Once he began, "I hope you haven't taken offense, Miss Shott, at what those—those presumptuous women said. I assure you I have never meant—I mean they didn't mean that *I* meant—that is, they meant that the firm might—"

"I understand perfectly," completed the demonstrator and waited for his "appreciation" of her "services." As none was forthcoming, she covered the silence with an airy flow of talk in which she

hit off her late job, the town itself, Mr. Adolphus Fisher—and Mr. Pincus suspected that once or twice she hit him off also.

Arrived at her gate, his heart was in his boots; he did not know how to say good-by. After flecking the gravel with his toe for some moments, he burst out wildly: "Miss Shott, you must think me an awful bore. There are several things I've wanted to say to you to-night; but you have talked so much—er—that is, it has been such a short walk—Really, Miss Shott, couldn't we persuade you to continue on with the firm?"

The demonstrator held out a hand that appeared to be cordial. "I don't see how you could," she answered. "I'm under contract to the Cutler people. It's too bad my gift of gab has kept you from saying anything you wanted to. Heigh-ho, Mr. Pincus, some roads lead to Rome and some into blind alleys. I'll stop into the office Monday morning on my way to the train; so we wont call this good-by, Mr. Pincus, but just good-night."

VI

Within an hour of train time on Monday morning Mr. George Pincus, Mr. Allan Pincus and Miss Euterpia Shott sat in the offices of the Pincus Biscuit Co. Miss Shott had received her final installment of wages, had rendered her complete account of sales negotiated and ended her professional connection with the firm. Nothing remained for her but to pick up her suit-case and make her adieu.

"There is no hurry," hemmed Mr. George Pincus, as she arose, "forty minutes yet till train time and I shall be only too pleased to carry your bag to the depot, if you will permit me."

"Why, yes," assented Miss Shott, sinking back upon the arts-crafts ottoman.

"You needn't bother about the bag, George," broke in Mr. Allan Pincus. "I'm going out on the same train and I'll carry it for Miss Shott. I forgot to tell you yesterday that I'd decided to double back my route. Let's see, it's ten-five on the Norfolk & Western, isn't it, Miss Shott?"



"Pinky, it's five words over the limit"

"I believe it is," agreed the lady.

"Well of all the—" the senior partner began; then supplemented speciously: "You'd better go see about getting your sample cases filled in time. Up in the factory they're not expecting you to leave till one."

"Oh, I've attended to all that long ago."

Mr. George Pincus bit the end of his pencil and glowered out of the window at the sun. "It is very awkward, changing your schedule like this," he said; "it will disarrange my whole program."

He pressed a button and a boy appeared. "If you will excuse me, Miss Shott—" he asked, then addressed himself to the composition of a note. While he was writing, he heard his brother say to the demonstrator:

"Oh, yes, I'll make Columbus by Saturday night, so we can take in a show. It'll sure be swell, putting in Sunday with some one I know."

Mr. Pincus folded his note with a frown.

"And we can arrange for a drive Sunday afternoon."

Mr. Pincus slipped a dollar bill into the note and a dime into the boy's fist. "Take this to the foreman at once," he said.

After the boy's disappearance there was an awkward pause. Mr. Allan Pincus took a memorandum from his pocket and accosted his brother with a triumphant smile. "Well, George," he said, "I guess you've got to admit that Miss Shott has demonstrated demonstrators to our satisfaction. Fifty per cent increase in local sales, package goods in fancy boxes proved a leader, and requests from four firms to handle our line with window displays. I guess we'll about take on ten more girls and put two demonstrators on the road for a starter, eh, George?"

"I don't know whether we will or not," said his partner dryly.

Just then the boy reappeared. "Party on the factory 'phone for Mr. Allan Pincus," he shouted.

Mr. Allan looked distinctly peeved. "I

can't come now," he said, "I'm just starting out on my trip."

"Party knows that, sir; says it's important, and wants to catch you before you leave."

"You'd better attend to it at once," the elder Mr. Pincus commanded. "I've no doubt it's the man about those fancy boxes you ordered. I shall assume no responsibility whatever in the matter."

After one long, level look at his brother and another at his watch, Mr. Allan Pincus said to the boy: "If there's a message, tell the foreman to take it. Miss Shott, if we expect to catch that particular train—"

The outer door burst open and a midge wearing a Western Union cap thrust himself into the group, bawling:

"Telegram for Miss Euturkey Shott. Is the party here? 'Cause if she aint, the boss said he knowed she was leavin' town an' I should beat it to the train."

"I'll wire the answer later," she said, when she had read the telegram. The boy withdrew. Without comment Miss Shott handed the telegram respectively to Mr. Allan and Mr. George. They read:

Report Columbus Monday night—
State Fair—Exhibit shipped—Wire
train. The Cutler Co.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Pincus, the younger, "it's certainly some stand-in you've got with that firm!"

Mr. Pincus, the elder, laid the telegram

on his desk and pulled a yellow pad from a pigeon-hole. His brother strapped an umbrella and a walking stick together, got himself into a fashionable fall overcoat and glanced impatiently toward the door. Miss Shott held out a tentative hand for her missive.

"Just a minute," said Mr. George Pincus. His face had gone very white. He tore from the pad a slip upon which he had written and handed it to Miss Shott.

"Miss Shott," he said, "I have taken the liberty of answering your telegram for you."

The demonstrator took the paper, read it hastily, lowered her eyes, and read it again. It was this:

The Cutler Co. Sorry to disappoint
but have just been engaged by G.
Pincus to demonstrate for life. E.
Shott.

After an elaborate affectation of counting the words the message contained, she glanced up and into the now steady gaze of her late employer. Though a tear struggled through the corner of her eye, her cheeks dimpled and her tremulous lips expanded into a piquant smile.

"Pinky," she said, "it's five words over the limit, but under the circumstances—"

"Under the circumstances," grinned Mr. Pincus, extending the telegram to his brother, "Miss Shott will hardly be taking the ten-five. You'd better hurry, Allan, or you'll miss your train."

The Black Fingers

BY ELEANOR GATES

Author of "The Plow Woman," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK X. CHAMBERLIN

DN! DN! DN! DN!"

It was the sharp, imperative summons of the telegraph-instrument. Betty Renshaw, the operator at Red Butte, dropped the long cape she was fastening about her shoulders and ran to answer the call.

"IIIIII!"

The message did not come at once,

and the short wait was as if the night operator at Maclyn, on the railroad line thirty miles away, were seated, his hand on the key, hesitating as to how he would frame his wire. Then—

The down Battle Creek stage was held up five miles below you by masked man. Passengers and mailbags not molested. Bullion-box of Red Butte Mine ordered thrown out.

The staccato ended. Betty answered entreatingly:

M! M! M! My brother was driving. Anybody hurt?

Quickly the reply came, telling her that the armed messenger had been taken unawares:

Galloway surprised. No shots fired. Happened on up-grade. Highwayman hidden in chaparral on level with top of stage. Good-night.

"O. K.," Betty ticked back.

She had leaned down to her table. Now she straightened, staring at the black square of her office window. "The gold bar's gone!" she said in a loud whisper. "The gold bar's gone!"

Betty Renshaw was the prettiest girl on the whole, winding length of the Red Butte stage-line. She was small and slender, and had the quick, sure step of the mountain-bred. Her hair, thick and straight and black, was worn in coiled braids that showed, here and there, just a glint of auburn in their weave. Her eyes were gray, with gold-brown flecks in them—as if the sun had touched them in touching her hair. But her long, up-curling lashes were as black as the darkest strand of her hair, and the brows above were black. It was her brows and nostrils that made the envious say that Betty Renshaw was proud. For she had only to veil the gentle brightness of her eyes and lift her chin an inch, and those arched brows and delicate nostrils would quiet the noisiest laugh in the camp and pull off the hat of the roughest miner. Her skin was the olive that is rich with cream. Over it the sun of her twenty years in the mountains of California had laid a soft veil of tan that only partly concealed the scarlet of her cheeks.

But as she stood staring out at the dark she was as pale as her tan permitted. Presently she caught one hand in the convulsive grasp of the other and began to walk about, as if seeking an escape from the unwelcome news of the message. "What will Mr. Habbegger say!" she exclaimed, over and over. "Oh, dear! What will Mr. Habbegger say!"

Habbegger was the mine superintend-

ent. Betty glanced at the clock. It was late—after nine. But the head of the Red Butte Quartz must be told.

Betty was "Central" as well as telegraph-operator at Red Butte. She crossed the room to her switch-board and rammed the plug into the extension that connected with the superintendent's house.

The response to her "Hello" was hearty and Celtic. It was the superintendent's housekeeper answering. "Sure, the boss aint at home, Miss Betty," she announced. "He's underground."

Betty called up the shaft-house.

Conroy, the "top-man," came to the telephone. "I wasn't here when Mr. Habbegger went down," he told her. "You see I don't come on duty till seven. But I don't leave till I've tallied off the last man of the graveyard shift,"—(the graveyard shift was the night shift)—"so I'll be sure to see him when he comes out."

"I'll be here till twelve," said Betty. There was just one other place where she might leave word for the superintendent—the office of the mine. She rang up.

An eager, boyish voice answered her. It was the chemist—young Perry Ward. "Say! This is mighty nice of you!" he declared. Like an accompaniment to his voice sounded the deep, regular *boom, boom, boom* of the stamps.

"I—I didn't expect to find anybody," explained Betty. She was a little bashful about talking to the chemist. His speech was college-stamped, and he had an air of easy assurance.

"Has anything happened?"

"Oh, yes."

"I'll be right down."

Betty cleared her board. Then once more she walked the room. It was a bare, unpapered room, and the discolored gray of its plaster was brightened only by a calendar or two, a small gilt-framed mirror, a great bunch of yellow marigolds in a wide-necked bottle, and the gay-flowered shades of two lamps. The switch-board was at one end of it, the telegraph-table at the other. Between, and close to a rear door, was a broad desk covered with papers, receipt-books and packages. For beside her other duties,

Betty was the express-agent for Dailey & Mills, proprietors of the Battle Creek-Maclyn Stage-Line.

The room itself occupied one end of a long building that was taken up, for the most part, by the Red Butte General Merchandise Store, now bolted and only dimly lit for the night. A porch ran the full length of the building. But at this season of the year (it was November) the evenings were too chill to be comfortable for loungers. So the long porch was deserted. And as Betty paced to and fro she listened for the step that would announce Ward's coming.

Presently it sounded along the board sidewalk leading up to the porch. It was a quick, sure step, like her own. Next came a knock and Ward entered.

He was no older than his voice. And there was only one summer's tan on his clean-shaven face. His hat was a wide gray beaver with the four-times-dented peak that marks the Western university man. He wore corduroy trousers stuffed into heavy, thong-laced half-boots, and a blue woolen shirt that lay open at the throat. Over shirt and trousers hung a long, loose, brown polo-coat.

He looked at Betty in some concern as he took off his hat and closed the door behind him. "Why, what is it?" he asked.

"The stage."

"Accident?"

"Hold-up. The—the gold bar's gone."



"Come," he urged gently, "I'm going to see you home"

Ward's lips moved. He was still looking at her but talking to himself under his breath. Presently he shook off his coat, letting it fall to the floor, rammed his hands into his trouser pockets, and stared down.

"Oh, I'm *so* sorry," said Betty, striving to keep her voice even. The color was back in her cheeks now, but tears were weighting the long lashes, and silvering them.

A moment, and Ward began to speak aloud. "I can't tell you what a shock this is to me," he said huskily. "The mine's almost my life, Miss Betty. I've staked

my reputation on it, and my last dollar. I've induced half a dozen of my friends to buy stock. In fact I'm the man that's responsible for the opening up of the whole thing. When I was a senior at the State University I heard there were two or three abandoned mines in these mountains. I'd already made up my mind that I didn't want to begin working for somebody else after graduation. So before the ink was dry on my diploma I came up to Red Butte. I assayed the quartz. I found it averaged eleven dollars a ton. And I was happy. You see, in the old days, a mine like this didn't pay because they had to use crude methods for getting out the gold. But I knew the up-to-date processes. And I knew there was a good profit in sight—well, eight per cent on every dollar-share, anyhow, and more, if conical mills were used.

"The timbering was in bad shape. The mine was flooded to the second level. Just the same, I determined to make the thing go. I went back down to the University, and got hold of one of my 'fraternity brothers.' He had quite a lot of money, and he took an interest in the mine and backed me to go East and get capital. I found some men in New York that agreed to form a company—if their expert reported favorably on the mine. The expert did. The company was formed. And they gave me twenty per cent of the stock and my position. Miss Betty, I felt as if life were opening up for me in great shape." He sat down disconsolately.

"But no one could help that fire in the second level," said Betty consolingly.

"No. But it meant a big assessment. It cleaned me out of every cent I'd earned. The next thing I knew there was a cave-in and *another* assessment. I borrowed for that one. But I didn't lose heart, because I didn't see how anything else could *possibly* go wrong. Ha! That's where I was mistaken. From one month's end to the other, it's been nothing but cranky machinery—and more assessments. We've had four altogether." He took a letter out of the wide pocket of his shirt. "I got this yesterday. It's from the 'fraternity brother' that backed me

to go East. He wants to know how much more cash he'll have to put out before the mine begins to pay. I laughed when I read it. There was that bar—that first, great, beautiful bar—"

"The mine's had awful bad luck," acknowledged Betty.

"Luck!" repeated Ward bitterly. "What'll this man say when he reads tomorrow morning that the stage was held up, and the bar stolen? I tell you, Miss Betty, it doesn't look like bad luck. It looks—fakey."

"The hold-up 'll hurt—a good many," she ventured.

"Yes," he answered. "I pity Gallo-way."

Betty took a step toward him. "But—but my brother," she said in a low voice. "My father and mother are dead. Dave's all I've got. He's been a little wild. And—and he was driving. And drivers are always talked about when there's a hold-up."

Ward rose quickly and strode across to her. "Is this going to hurt *you*?" he asked. "Well, that's the last straw!"

There was something in his tone that made her look down, and she shrank back a little, until she stood beside her desk.

"I haven't told you another reason why I'm so—so heartsick over this robbery," he went on. Then—"Betty!"

For a long half-minute neither spoke. She continued to look down, her face pink under its tan, her fingers busy with some letters that she had taken up. He watched her, standing close at her side. His own face was white. His jaw was set.

"You're not the kind of a girl that thinks a man's getting interested in you," he began presently. "That's because you're such a wise, busy, little woman. But I've just been waiting till things turned out better at the mine." He put out a hand and took one of hers. Then—"Come," he urged gently. "I'm going to see you home."

"But Mr. Habbegger? He ought to be told." She let her hand rest in his grasp.

"If I can't see him to-night I'll tell him about it the first thing in the morning. I wake at five—never can sleep after

the stamps stop." He picked up her cloak and reached down her plaid 'Tam o' Shanter from a nail. And when she had put them on obediently, and found her keys, he blew out the lights and locked the front door.

Red Butte was set on a shoulder of the mountain that gave the little mining-town its name. Behind the camp rose steep, pine-clothed slopes that met the sky in an uneven line. Below it stretched others that reached to the valley. As Betty and Ward left the express-office and took the downward-trending road, the whole mountain was in deep blackness, save for a few scattered lights in the camp proper. There were stars overhead, but those did not penetrate the thick dark, which filled the valley like a vast, still, tree-edged lake.

Ward and Betty walked slowly. Her hand was on his arm. "We've got to get out another bar," he told her. "And maybe we'll land that robber—bullion isn't the easiest thing in the world to realize on, you know. And if our luck changes, Betty—"

A gate led into the cottage where Betty boarded. They stopped beside it. And one by one the lights of the camp went out as they lingered, till at last only the stars remained to note a reluctant parting.

But at five Betty was back in her office. Habbegger called her up shortly afterward, his voice registering anger and disgust. "That Galloway must 've been asleep," he declared sarcastically. "I wonder if he thinks we put him on that stage as an ornament." And when Betty read him the Maelyn message, he answered—"Just send that news on to the New York office of the mine, will you? And add, 'Shall I offer reward?' Sign my name."

Three hours later an answer came. Like the majority of the wires exchanged by the New York office and the mine, this one was in cipher. Habbegger made its contents plain by appearing at the express-office at nine o'clock and tacking up a notice signed by Habbegger in behalf of the Board of Directors. The notice announced that five hundred dollars

would be paid for information leading to the arrest of the highwayman.

Habbegger was a tall man with a thin, nervous face. His eyes were dark and keen, and lay intrenched behind heavy pouches that told of some chronic ailment. He was middle-aged, but his wide hat, his smart, belted coat, and the knickerbockers that met his leather puttees, gave him a youthful, and at the same time a soldierly, appearance. When he took off the wide hat to greet Betty, he uncovered hair that was sparse over the crown and well grayed at the temples. He looked older thus. He put his hat on again at once, but drew off leather gauntlets that gave an added note to the military in his make-up. His gloves half in and half out of a pocket, he hunted a brier pipe and set about filling it.

"This'll hurt the mine," he declared to Betty.

"That's what Mr. Ward says," she returned with more than a hint of pride in her voice.

"Anybody could see that," went on Habbegger with some irritation. He leaned in the doorway, smoking and scowling.

At ten o'clock, a double team hitched to a covered buggy drew up in front of the express-office. Out of it stepped a man in a linen duster—a small, mild-appearing man with a drooping mustache of varying blonde shades. When he had tied his horses, he crossed the porch to the bulletin-board of the express-office and tacked up a notice beside Habbegger's. This notice was also the offer of a five-hundred-dollar reward—made by the State of California.

The putting up of the notice drew a little crowd—from the store, from the post-office beyond, and from the blacksmith-shop across the road. The man in the linen duster had a ready smile. He bestowed it upon each of the curious, and called each by name. Then he went back to his buggy, lifted out of it a long, narrow, heavy something wrapped in a thin lap-robe and disappeared into the express-office.

Habbegger was there, seated now, and moodily nursing a knee. "Hello, Sher-

iff!" he exclaimed, jumping up in surprise.

"Hello," returned the sheriff genially. "So they got away with your bar last night? Howdy, Miss Betty." He leaned the long package against her desk.

"Oh, I *hope* you're going to catch that road-agent," said Betty, shaking hands.

"We'll get him," declared the officer. "You know this County's had just about its fill of hold-ups. The tax-payers are tired of spending good money on man-hunts and trials and grub for a lot of thugs. These fellows—"

"You think there was more than one?" asked Habbegger.

The sheriff closed the door. "There were two, anyhow," he answered. "And I'm going to land 'em in San Quentin."

"What makes you think there were two?" demanded Habbegger.

The sheriff looked from the superintendent to Betty and back again. "Because," he said in a low voice, "this was an inside job."

Betty took a quick, startled breath.

"An inside job?" repeated Habbegger.

"Somebody from Red Butte had a hand in the business. Look here." The sheriff unwrapped the long, heavy package. An ax was disclosed. He handed it to Habbegger.

The superintendent turned it over. Then—"Yes, you're right," he said.

"It was about twenty feet from where the bullion-box was broken into," went on the other man, "hanging in the crotch of a manzanita. The second I got my eyes on it, I knew it belonged to the mine. You showed me the axes, you remember, the day the shipment got here by the freighters."

"What're you going to do first?" The superintendent gave the ax to Betty.

"Ask some questions," answered the sheriff, smiling. "Number One—what understanding do you have with Dailey & Mills about carrying your bullion?"

"We seal the box, deliver it here—"

"To Miss Renshaw?"

"Yes; and put our own messenger aboard the stage to guard it."

"Galloway, then, is in the employ of the mine?"

"Yes."

"Dailey & Mills don't stand good for any loss?"

"We pay them for hauling the box and the messenger."

"I see. How long has it been since you sent an ingot?"

"This was our first."

"When did you put Galloway up as messenger?"

"Ten days ago."

"So for ten days the box has been a blind?"

"Yes."

"Yesterday it wasn't, and there was a hold-up." The sheriff made a gesture of finality. "That wasn't a coincidence."

"Couldn't 've been," agreed Habbegger. "Well; we'll keep a sharp watch on anybody that leaves, or begins to spend money freely."

"You said—'We seal the box.' Who is 'we'?"

"Perry Ward and I. Ward is the chemist."

"I know. And nobody at the mine knew gold was going down?"

"Nobody."

Now the officer turned to Betty. "You aren't asked to put a valuation on the bullion-box when you ship it?" he said.

"No, sir."

"Even when there's a gold bar in it?" She shook her head.

"Then you didn't know a bar was going down?"

Now Betty's face grew pale. But she did not retreat. "I—I knew," she said.

Habbegger turned on her. "You knew?" he said. "How?"

She met his look appealingly. "I want to tell the truth," she began. "But—oh, I don't want to get you down on—on anybody."

"There's just one person that *could* tell you," declared Habbegger sternly.

The tears swam in her eyes. She took her trembling lower lip in her teeth.

"Ward?" said the sheriff.

She nodded.

"Well, you bet your life, I'll see him about that," burst out the superintendent angrily. He started toward the door.

"Wait," counseled the sheriff. Then to Betty, "When did Mr. Ward tell you that there was bullion going down?"



"I—figger to get over that way in a minute," he called back

"When he brought the box."

"At what hour, I mean?"

"About three in the afternoon."

"And—who did *you* tell?"

Her eyes were frightened now. She fixed them on the sheriff's face. "I didn't really—tell," she faltered.

"No? Just what happened?"

"I—I admitted it."

"To—?"

"Go on," commanded Habbegger.

"Dave." It was a whisper. She covered her face with both hands.

The two men exchanged glances. But neither spoke.

Presently she lowered her hands to her side and went on: "It was just as the stage was starting. Dave came in for the box and—"

"I thought Galloway had charge of the box," interrupted the sheriff.

"Dave does the loading. As he took hold of the straps he said—'I'll bet there's a real one in it to-day.'"

"And you said—?"

"I just smiled."

"Didn't say a word?"

"Not a single word. Honest!"

"Then there were three who actually knew about the shipment—you, Mr. Habbegger, young Ward, and Miss Betty, here. And Renshaw had a pretty good idea about it. Well—I think I'd like to see Ward."

The superintendent made an imperative gesture toward the telephone. "Ask him to come here," he said to Betty.

She hastened across the room.

"How long does the stage stop at Red Butte on its down trip?" asked the sheriff.

Habbegger answered. "Five minutes, about. They change horses." Then to Betty—"How many passengers went down last night, Miss Renshaw?"

"Two—ladies." She left her switchboard and came back to where the men were standing.

"I had a talk with both passengers last night," said the sheriff. "The second Galloway called me up at my office, I got busy."

When Ward came in his face looked haggard. His hat had been put on absent-mindedly over a green pasteboard eye-shade. But his eyes lit up with pleasure at sight of the officer.

It was Habbegger who greeted him, however. "How does it come that you can't keep your business to yourself?" he demanded angrily. "You told this girl that—"

"Now look here," broke in Ward, warningly. "Miss Renshaw's brother isn't here to see that she's treated with courtesy. I am."

"What has that got to do with this hold-up?" went on Habbegger. His voice rose almost to a shout.

Ward stepped to Betty's side. "Nothing. But I've asked her to be my wife. That explains how I came to talk about the shipment. It was our first good news. And if the mine gets to paying—"

"I understand," said the sheriff kindly.

It was now close upon noon, and the up-stage was due. Already the fresh horses for the remainder of the drive to Battle Creek were in wait before the post-office, having been led up from their stable in the rear. There was a good-sized crowd of men standing about the four-in-hand. Another crowd made partly of women had gathered on the store porch, from where they watched toward Maclyn. Others were before the bulletin-board of the express-office, or walking back and forth in front of Betty's door.

Just as the mid-day whistle at the stamp-mill echoed and re-echoed against the wooded slope of Red Butte Moun-

tain, the dusty four-in-hand of the up-bound stage swung into sight around the nearest curve. Dave Renshaw was in his place, sitting bent over, his coat off, his vest unbuttoned over a soft shirt, his slouch hat pulled well down, but its limber brim blown back by the wind.

Beside him was Galloway, thick-set and florid, with his repeating shot-gun between his knees. At the feet of the two men was a small, iron-bound box, the heavy wood of which showed white where it had been splintered.

As the stage stopped before the store there was some good-natured laughter in the waiting crowd. "Lost your wad, eh, boys?" called out one man banteringly.

Galloway shook his head despairingly. Renshaw ignored everything but his team.

"Galloway!"

The call came from the door of the express-office. The superintendent was standing on the sill.

Gun in hand, Galloway climbed down and went to answer the summons.

Dave lifted the broken bullion-box by its straps. "Look out," he said to the men who were standing at the off wheel. He let the box fall to the ground.

"Renshaw!"

This time the call was a command. It was Habbegger again.

Dave was down, and the center of an inquiring throng. Now he looked toward the superintendent, his face reddening with anger. "I—figger to git over that way in a minute," he called back. His tone was resentful.

The crowd laughed.

He picked up the broken box and carried it along the porch and into the express-office. "Hello, Betty," he said cheerily, and gave her tear-stained face a searching glance. "Howdy, Sheriff. Howdy, Ward." Then he came upon Habbegger. "I just want to say this:" he went on. "Because the stage was held up last night, aint no reason why you're a-goin' to holler any orders at me. You know I'm a-drivin' for Dailey & Mills."

"You knew a bar was in that box," began Habbegger, pointing.

Dave shook his head. "Nope," he declared. "I only just guessed at it."

"And you let a woman passenger ride on top."

"There's a' extra seat on top. Women gener'llly like it. And Dailey & Mills let 'em set there. This stage-line is what you might call equal rights." He put out an arm and drew Betty to him.

"But I couldn't run the chances of drawing fire with a woman right at my back," argued Galloway. "You see *that*, Sheriff."

"You *couldn't*," answered Dave. "Wal, what's the matter with you? Don't you know that there aint a hold-up man in this hull West that'd shoot down a woman. Say! where was you raised, anyhow!"

"Galloway," said the sheriff, "did *you* know bullion was going down?"

"No, I didn't."

"Were you armed, Renshaw?" asked Habbegger.

"Of course, I'm armed. But what could I do? Here I was with my hands full of horses. And here"—he thrust Betty to one side and turned upon Galloway—"was this messenger—a dandy, I don't think! Six ca'tridges in his old Riot. And he set like a bump on a log."

"Don't you dare—" began Galloway.

The sheriff stepped between. "This'll do," he said. All his mildness was suddenly gone. "A quarrel wont help matters."

"The next time I'll blaze away," stormed Galloway, "—women or no women."

"Dailey & Mills had better keep women off the top," said Habbegger. "Miss Betty, get me their Maclyn stables, will you?"

A boy with an armful of newspapers opened the front door, threw a paper into the room and went on.

"I suppose the story's all here," said Ward as he picked the paper up. "Yes; here it is."

Habbegger took the paper from him. They stood reading it together.

Dave took out a large nickel watch and consulted it. "Time I was movin'," he announced. "Aint had my noon fodder yet." He crossed the room to kiss Betty, nodded to the sheriff, and strode out.

Ward followed.

"There's a leak somewhere, Mr. Habbegger," said the sheriff.

Presently Galloway took his leave. Then Habbegger went, having finished his telephoning. He took the sheriff with him.

Left alone, Betty went to her telegraph-table and drew out a wide drawer. There, filed in two piles, were the telegrams that had been sent and received during the fortnight just past.

She went over them carefully. There were wires from the owners of the Red Butte General Merchandise Store—all demands on San Francisco wholesale houses for quick shipments of goods; and there were answers to these. Other telegrams signed by the proprietor of the local butcher-shop asked for consignments of meat by the next freighter. One telegram that was more personal was directed to the wife of a miner, advising her of her mother's serious illness at Maclyn. The woman had gone through Red Butte two days before.

There were two messages from Habbegger to the New York office of the mine, and two answering messages. All but the one dated the day previous were in cipher. It was the Phelps-Dodge code.

In the back of the drawer was an old code-book. She had never used it before. But now she took it out. And when she had dusted it, she pored over it until each of the ciphers was clear to her. The first related to the purchase of stock. The second, signed Habbegger, informed the Company that Ward was getting out a gold bar. The third, which was dated at New York two days before, ordered Habbegger to report on the winz in the third level west. Like the first, this one was signed by the Board of Directors.

"I wonder if anybody at Maclyn saw the one about the bar?" pondered Betty.

Ward came back into the office then, and she went over to sit down at the express desk. She was white and tired and near to tears. "It's just as I said," she began. "The driver always gets blamed when there's a hold-up."

Ward stood in front of her, smiling down. "Why, nobody even thinks of blaming your brother," he declared.



There was a dim shape against the wall of the grade. He fired down at it, point blank

"Did you—tell him anything—about us?" she asked.

"He nearly pumped my arm off." Ward laughed happily, and reached to take one of her hands. "Now come. You must go over to your dinner."

"Will you stay to dinner with me?"

"Yes."

She rose. Then—"There's a faucet and soap just outside the back door. Would you like to—" She was looking at the hand that held hers. The fingers of it were black, as if smeared by ink.

He laughed again. "I don't wonder you suggest soap and water. But I couldn't wash 'em clean. You see, it's a burn."

"A burn!"

"Nitrate of silver. I got a little of the powder on 'em last night by accident. I didn't notice it—the stuff is as colorless as water, you know—and the powder, acting with the natural moisture of the hand, caused the burn."

The long porch was deserted as they came out upon it, and the sheriff's buggy was nowhere to be seen. The sheriff himself, with Galloway beside him, was climbing a zig-zag path to the nearest cook-house. Behind trailed the crowd.

Nothing happened at Red Butte that afternoon except a great deal of conversation, which took the form of speculation and was held, for the most part, in the General Merchandise Store, where the rifled bullion-box and the Company's ax formed an exhibit for the curious. Toward evening, however, speculation changed to anecdote, the first sign of a dying interest in the hold-up. Then the crowd about the exhibit thinned, and when the new bullion-box was swung upon the down-stage at five o'clock, and Galloway, gun in hand, climbed to his place beside Dave, there was less than a score of people on the store porch. The next morning the box and the ax were returned to the express-office to make way for an ingenious arrangement of mirrors and trays designed to hold assorted gum. And a new excitement occupied the scattered mining camp—a fistic encounter between two husky Cornishmen.

But Betty did not forget the robbery, or cease to worry about it. To her it meant Dave's good name.

"How about Galloway?" argued Ward one day.

"He didn't know a bar was going down," reminded Betty.

"That's so."

"Oh, I know Dave isn't guilty," she went on. "And yet—only the four of us knew. Who did it?"

"I've written my friends that I'm not discouraged," said Ward. "There's plenty of gold where that first bar came from."

When they strolled together in the twilight that settled early on that mountain-side, Betty forgot her worries. Then she and Ward talked of their happiness.

Thus a week went by.

By now the notices of rewards on the bulletin-board in front of the express-office had become loosened at a corner or two in the night winds that swept Red Butte. The paper curled and Betty had to fasten the squares more securely with little strips of pine. Then the dust of passing wagons reddened, and almost hid, the typewritten words of one, the printed lines of the other. All of which was of small importance. For now nobody stopped to read.

Then, one morning, a rumor traveled the winding route of the Red Butte stage-line. It came by way of the freighter, to the accompaniment of the little bells on the hames of the leading mules. When it reached the mine, it climbed the zig-zag trails on foot, and was passed from mouth to mouth in the camp. But for all that it made fast progress, it did not once use the wires that led out from the switch-board in the express-office. For this was a rumor that could not be spoken into a transmitter, where Betty Renshaw might hear.

But at half-past eleven, it ticked its way from Maclyn. The telegraph instrument in Betty's office sounded the familiar "DN." A message followed:

Betty, don't worry. Laid off till things straighten out. Wad Horton taking stage up. Dave.



"Sheriff," said Ward, "here's your highwayman"

Betty sent no "O. K." back to the Maclyn operator. She ran, covering her eyes as if from something terrifying, to drop into the chair behind her desk. And there Ward found her.

"That's his way of saying he's arrested," she sobbed.

Half an hour later the stage came into sight with an unfamiliar figure on the driver's seat—a man well past middle-age, with a short, grizzled beard. A

considerable crowd had gathered to watch the arrival. They stood about in silence.

More definite news about Dave was brought Betty when Galloway came into the office, carrying the bullion-box. "They been watching everybody, you know," he began, by way of consolation. "And—well, it seems that Dave flashed a lot of twenties around Maclyn last night, so—"

"Dave'll explain that," declared Ward. He was beside Betty's chair.

"'Course he will," Galloway answered. "And he'll bring the stage up to-morrow, see if he don't. This taking him off, it's a shame, that's what it is."

When Galloway was gone, Ward lifted Betty's face tenderly. "Don't take it so hard," he begged. "Galloway's right.—Dave'll bring up the stage to-morrow."

"He's so proud," she whispered back. "This'll hurt him. And—I don't know what he'll do—"

"We want him up here," declared Ward. "Send for him, Betty. We'll keep him cheered."

"Oh, I knew the hold-up 'd hurt him," she said. "I'll never be happy now till the right man's found."

"He's probably here on the mountain, laughing up his sleeve. I'm with the sheriff on one thing: there was no coincidence about it—it was an inside job."

Betty had crossed to the switch-board. Now she faced about. "Wont the same man try it again—next time?"

"Not right away. Galloway tells me that a stage is always safest just after a hold-up."

Habbegger entered. "What's this I hear about your brother?" he demanded. "Why, he didn't have a thing to do with that robbery. What in the name of common sense does the sheriff mean by making such a break?"

"He wants that thousand dollars bounty," reminded Ward.

"If he'd just add two and two he'd know he was wrong," scolded the superintendent. Then to Betty—"Ward says you didn't have the least idea that a bar was going down till three o'clock the afternoon of that day."

"I didn't."

"Renshaw was on his stage by then, coming back this way from Battle Creek. He couldn't be reached by telephone or wire or letter. He didn't stop here more than five minutes. And it was a physical impossibility for him to get hold of a confederate in that short space of time and arrange for a hold-up miles down the mountain.—Give me the sheriff's office on the telephone."

Betty had never liked Habbegger, thinking him too domineering. Now she suddenly felt very grateful to him.

Dave came that night, riding a horse from the Dailey & Mills stables at Maclyn. Betty and Ward were waiting for him at the express-office, and when he appeared in the doorway, Betty ran to him, putting out her arms.

He caught her to him, holding her close, as if to shield her. "Thank goodness, you'll be outen this office soon," he said huskily, and patted her braids. Then to Ward—"This business has just about made the kid sick."

"You're not under arrest?" asked Ward.

"This layin' me off amounts to the same thing. Wal, I'm allus puttin' my blamed foot in it. That cash got to burnin' my pocket. Then here come the sheriff, inquiren' how I come to have so much money. And the truth about it didn't satisfy him."

Betty lifted a troubled face. "What was the truth, Dave?" she asked.

"I'm ashamed of it, kid. But you got to know, and I don't want you to hear it from anybody else. I—I won a pile at poker."

"Then you've got your proof," said Ward, relieved. "The man that lost—"

"The feller that lost was a stranger in Maclyn, and he never told me his name. He went on down to the City by that next mornin' train. But there was more'n twenty watchin' us play."

Betty left her brother's side and went to Ward. "I haven't told anybody that we're engaged," she said. "And now that Dave has been—"

"This doesn't make any difference with me," declared Ward quickly.

"She means it looks like a family affair," Dave explained. "Val, it does. You tell Betty, Betty tells me."

"And I don't want anything said against Perry," she added.

"What we got to do," said Dave, "is to land that road-agent."

When Betty and Ward were alone again, she gave him a smile that was half-bashful and half-entreating. "Will you make fun of me if I tell you something?" she asked.

"No."

"I've got a scheme that'll work if there's another hold-up." They went to a corner that was at the end of the room opposite to the General Merchandise Store. Here, secure from overhearing, Betty unfolded her plan.

"The only trouble," she said in conclusion, "is that I ought to know every time a real bar is shipped."

"All right," promised Ward. "I'll tell you when. If it's over the telephone I'll say—'Betty, there's a storm coming up.' And if the stage ever is robbed again, I believe your scheme'll work. If it does, I'll play detective in Maclyn after I've scouted around up here."

Dave spent the whole of the next morning just outside the rear door of the express-office, where, beside the faucet, with hammer and saw, and a short length of plank, he worked away mending the splintered side of the rifled bullion-box.

But he had scarcely finished his work when he was summoned to the telephone. The manager for Dailey & Mills was on the other end of the wire. He directed Dave to go back upon the stage.

During the week that followed, there were no developments touching the hold-up. But there were more rumors. One said that a new man at the stamp-mill was a detective in disguise. Another, that bullion had been offered at a bank in the small town of Champion, eighty miles to the south, by a tall man who arrived in an automobile. A third whispered that there was a warrant out for Dave Renshaw, and that his arrest might come at any time.

Meanwhile letters arrived for Ward from two or three of his friends. They expressed their belief that the mine was hoodooed. They announced that they were selling their shares.

"And I asked them to hold on to their stock!" mourned Ward. "Oh, if I had the money I'd buy every bit of it in. Nobody can tell *me* that Red Butte wont strike twelve."

Betty played the detective herself those days. Every telephone call was noted, every telegram closely scanned. There were few of the latter, and the

majority were, as usual, to or from the mine. One morning Habbegger sent a wire to the New York office of the Company that made Betty very happy. She read it with the help of her code-book—the proud announcement that Ward was getting out another bar.

When she called Ward up, she was all excitement. "Isn't there a storm coming up?" she asked eagerly.

"How did you guess?" said Ward.

She told him.

"There is," he answered, "—to-morrow, if I'm any judge of weather."

That evening when Ward came, he took from a pocket of his polo-coat a small, light package which he handed Betty. Another package, heavy, and slung about his shoulders in a sack that the coat covered, he put carefully out of sight under the express-desk.

The day following, Betty stood guard at her switch-board so faithfully that her lunch was eaten there. But each call as it came proved to be of no importance. As for the telegraph instrument, it ticked out only one message, and that from New York. It was to the superintendent, expressing gratification over his good news and instructing him to report again on the winz in the third level west. The message was signed by the Board of Directors. It came just as the bullion-box was being delivered into Betty's charge. She sent a copy of it to Habbegger's office by Ward.

When the down-stage drew up at the store porch that evening, Betty took careful note of the passengers bound for Maclyn. There were two: the wife of a Battle Creek sheep-man and a young miner from a lead two miles away. The woman was inside the stage. The miner, who was going down to the railroad line to have a broken arm reset, was on top, seated directly behind Dave.

As the latter swung the bullion-box up into place, Galloway climbed to his seat, his gun in the crook of his left arm. Betty came out to wave good-by. The long whip-lash trailed, swishing, through the air. It popped. "So long," called Dave. The leaders sprang into their collars. The flanks of the wheelers strained with the start. And the stage left the

freshly hosed square in front of the store.

Having seen the stage well on its way, Betty went back to her switch-board. First of all she rang up the superintendent's office. "Is Mr. Habbegger there?" she asked.

"No, Miss Renshaw." It was a stenographer answering. "He's underground."

"Oh—of course," said Betty. "I'd forgotten." Then she inserted the plug into the extension that connected with the shafthouse. Conroy was not on duty as "top-man." It was Williams, a new employee.

"I must see Mr. Habbegger before nine," telephoned Betty. "Please give him the message when he comes out."

Williams promised.

But when Ward came he quieted Betty's concern. "I'm in on this scheme," he reminded her, "and I've arranged that when the bullion-box reaches the Maclyn express people, Galloway is to hand the agent a letter from me."

Twilight was settling. Betty pinned on her Tam o' Shanter, wrapped her long coat about her, and with Ward at her side, paced the long porch of the store.

Meanwhile the stage was rolling down the mountain at a smart pace, the leaders methodically swinging to the very edge of the grade to take the outer curves, or swinging in until the neck-yoke of the high horse scraped the perpendicular face of the cliff. Dave drove without speaking, his foot on the brake, his eye on his horses. Galloway was silent too, and watched the road ahead alertly.

The long grade was soon traveled. The bridge across a roaring stream was crossed. The horses slowed to a walk to tug up the short, sharp ascent beyond. It was already dark in the gorge.

"Right at a place like this is where the road-agents come their tricks," declared the man in the back seat. He pointed with his well hand.

"That's right," Galloway agreed. He brought his shot-gun down to rest upon his knee. "The grade's steep, and that slows the stage. And the horses can stop—"

"Halt!"

The sharp command came from the road ahead. The horses, frightened, swerved to one side, stopped, and the leaders piled down against the wheelers. Fearful of being backed off the grade, Dave applied the brake.

The man in the rear seat ducked his head, then lay down.

There was a dark shape in the road ahead. It was partly concealed by a jutting rock.

"Throw out the box," was the next command. "On the inside of the road."

Galloway did not lift his gun. "He's got the drop," he said bitterly.

Dave dragged at the straps of the box and let the heavy cube drop to the ground over the left front wheel.

"Drive on," commanded the voice.

Dave eased the brake and spoke to his horses. The team started, shying out as they came abreast of the highwayman.

The next moment up came Galloway's gun. There was the dim shape against the wall of the grade. He fired down at it point-blank.

The horses leaped forward, dragging the stage half a rod. Then, *bang!* went the robber, and twice more—*bang! bang!*

From inside the stage came screams.

The horses were running now. Galloway turned, knelt on his seat and fired again.

Then the stage swung round a curve.

At the top of the grade Dave faced Galloway. "Why didn't you fire before that box went down?" he asked, but very quietly.

"Your off leader was right in the way."

"Um. That horse aint worth more'n sixty plunks. And it's likely that one of your nine bullets would 'a' hit the road-agent. You could pay for the horse outen your thousand dollars reward."

"Ma'am, you all right?" asked the man with the broken arm. He leaned over the edge of the stage.

When the woman answered tearfully that she was, Dave's long whip swished through the air and fell across the backs of the leaders. The coach began a second, and long, descent.

Galloway threw a fresh shell into place. "Who'd 'a' thought anything

would happen so soon after the other hold-up?" he complained. "I'll bet it was the same man. Well, I peppered him that second shot."

"This'll hurt the stage-line," declared the passenger on the rear seat.

Dave said nothing.

At nine o'clock Betty and Ward forsook their beat on the long porch and came back into the express-office.

"There's one thing that's beautiful about your scheme," Ward said as he placed chairs close to the telegraph-table. "It'll work a week from now, or a month from now, just exactly as well as it'd work to-night. Betty! You smart little woman!"

"But I feel silly," protested Betty, blushing at his praise. "Because I don't believe there'll be a hold-up to-night—maybe there won't be another—"

The sharp, clicking summons of the telegraph instrument interrupted.

DN! DN! DN! DN!

It brought the two to their feet, and Betty, as if in fear, caught at Ward's sleeve.

"Answer," he said. "This isn't anything. It's too soon."

"I! I! I! I!" ticked Betty. "It can't be," she said over a shoulder.

The message began.

"Perry! But it is! Five shots were fired!"

He put an arm about her then, for fear had sent the color from her cheeks. Supported thus, she listened to the remainder of the message, repeating each word to him as it was spelled out:

Nobody hurt. Mail and passengers not molested. Bullion-box thrown out.

"Betty!" cried Ward joyously. "We'll land our man if he doesn't take to the woods!"

"Oh, I'm not thinking about that," the girl half sobbed. "But so much shooting! What if Dave—"

"My gracious! wasn't it lucky!" exclaimed Ward thankfully. "Think of it! Five shots!"

Then the instrument called again.

DN! DN! Galloway's shot-gun loaded with blanks.

Dave.

"Galloway!" exclaimed Betty.

Ward could not believe there was not some mistake. "Ask Maclyn to repeat," he urged.

Once more receiver clicked:

Galloway arrested. Will be brought through to Battle Creek jail.

"The hold-up must've happened in this county," explained Ward. "Ask if Galloway confessed."

Soon came the answer:

Cheeky cuss. Says I tampered with the gun. Tell Ward to go through Galloway's room to-night.

"I'll take you home first," said Ward.

Betty was already across the room at her telephone. "But I must get Mr. Habbegger," she declared. "He ought to know right away."

"No!" Ward called—and ran to her, holding back her hand from the board. "Betty, don't tell a *soul* till you and I've had a chance at finding our man. The scheme has worked. Mr. Habbegger won't find fault with you for being so keen. Don't you *believe* it! And I don't want anybody but you—no, not even him—to get that thousand dollars."

"Well—" She was only half convinced.

"And don't let a telegram or a telephone go through this office to-night," went on Ward. "Galloway might try to warn his confederate."

"I'll go home," declared Betty, flying here and there.

He helped her with the lights and the locking-up. Then, half running, and without speaking, they set off down the road.

At Betty's gate Ward stopped long enough to whisper some advice. "Don't go to the office a minute sooner than you can help to-morrow morning. We want to let Galloway get started this way before he has a chance to send a single word to Red Butte. Have a headache, Betty, or the toothache. Now, I'm going through Galloway's room."

A hoot-owl in a pine by the gate looked down on a quick and tender parting. Then Betty slipped along the garden path to the shelter of the home door, and Ward hastened back along the road on his secret mission.

Betty did not go to her office until half-past eight. Ward was not there, and no word was waiting for her. She understood why. With sun-up, Galloway's confederate, if he was a Red Butte man, would be quietly back at work to disarm any possible suspicion. Through the camp and into the tunnels, Ward was hunting him.

Betty did her part, watching every passer-by when she was not busy at switch-board or key.

Shortly before nine a team came into sight around the nearest curve toward Maclyn. The vehicle was the sheriff's top-buggy, and Galloway shared the single seat. As the two men came nearer, a horse and rider emerged from the cloud of dust behind them. Dave Renshaw was following.

The buggy drew up beside the store porch, and Dave dismounted. At the same moment Ward came at a run along a path that led down from the mine. Then the sheriff and Galloway climbed out of the buggy. The four entered the express-office together.

It was Galloway who spoke first. And whatever embarrassment there was in that meeting was not shared by him. "I demand to see Mr. Habbegger," he declared angrily. He sat down.

"Get Mr. Habbegger on the telephone, Miss Betty," bade the sheriff.

Betty tried the office of the mine, and was successful. "Mr. Galloway's here under arrest," she reported.

"What did he say?" asked Dave, trying to keep a sober face.

"He was surprised," said Betty. "He'll be right down."

"The idea of arresting a man like this," Galloway went on. "I tell you, Sheriff, somebody monkeyed with that shot-gun. They changed shells on me."

Dave laughed. "You mean me, o' course," he said. "Wal, I didn't monkey with the shot-gun that belonged to the gent in the road. But he fired three times

at us—that was twenty-seven bullets if he had a blunderbuss like yourn. And he wasn't the length of this room." Then the laugh went out of his eyes. He strode forward. "Galloway," he said sternly, "you was in cahoots with that feller, and you *both* had blanks."

"I deny I've ever had a blank," answered Galloway. "You say that because—Well, *you* know how those shells got into my magazine."

There was a moment of silence. Dave turned to Ward. "How about it?" he asked. "Did you take a look around his room last night?"

Ward nodded. "Found more than two-thirds of a box of cartridges," he answered. "They're all marked blank on the wads."

"It'll be easy to find out where they was bought," said Dave to the sheriff. "Thank y', my son,"—this to Ward.

The superintendent was seen approaching.

"Mr. Habbegger wont stand for my arrest," declared Galloway. "You're all mighty mistaken if you think you're going to jail me." He stood up.

Habbegger entered. He looked from Galloway to the sheriff, from the sheriff to Dave. "Well?" he said.

"Mr. Habbegger," stormed Galloway. "I look to you—"

"A-a-ah!"

It was half-shriek, half-groan. Betty's lips uttered it. At the same time her hands came up to drive it back. She was looking at Habbegger—her eyes dilated, her face white.

Dave went to her. But Ward stepped forward and faced the superintendent. "Mr. Habbegger," he said, "there's a spot on your cheek."

Habbegger stared at the younger man. "My cheek?" he repeated. "What cheek? What're you driving at?" He turned—and found himself facing Betty's mirror. He went close to it, lifting a gauntleted hand to touch the offending mark.

"Where did you get it?" asked Ward.

Habbegger wheeled. "You use a different tone to me," he commanded angrily.

"Isn't it a finger-print?" went on Ward.

Habbegger glowered.

"What has this got to do with the case?" asked the sheriff.

"Just this," answered Ward. "Mr. Habbegger got powdered nitrate of silver on his fingers last night when he handled the chamois bag that was put around a fake bar."

Habbegger backed. "You dared to change bullion-boxes on me?" he demanded.

Ward turned to the sheriff. "Let Mr. Habbegger take off his gloves," he said significantly.

"I'll do nothing of the sort," declared the superintendent. "What in the name of common sense is this?—an April fool's joke?"

"Take off your gloves," repeated Ward.

Again Habbegger backed a step, giving Galloway a quick look, and the sheriff one of appeal.

The next moment, Dave, standing between Betty and the superintendent, reached out and with one swift, vigorous jerk stripped off Habbegger's right gauntlet.

The latter gave an exclamation, and shoved the hand into a pocket. But not before the others had seen it. His fingers were as black as if they had been smeared with ink.

"Sheriff!" said Ward. "Here's your highwayman!"

Habbegger's face set in a distorted grin. "Well what of it?" he demanded boldly. "I've got telegraphic orders from my Board of Directors authorizing me to stop the first two shipments of bullion *en-route*."

"Orders through *here*?" asked the sheriff.

"Why, no," contradicted Betty.

"Inspect the winz in the third level west," quoted Habbegger.

"Gee whillikens!" breathed Dave in amazement.

"Instead of letting the gold go back into the pockets of the poor devils that 've been paying out assessments!" It was Ward again. He met Habbegger's smile with an angry glare.

"So what I did," continued Habbegger, "wasn't stealing. I merely delayed something that belonged to the Company."

The sheriff gave a harsh laugh. "The State of California will have something to say about that," he observed.

But Ward, white with rage, and tense, as if ready to spring, was speaking again: "Now I understand the fire, the cave-in, and the broken machinery. You saw I'd got hold of a good thing. You were trying to squeeze me and the small stockholders out."

"Put it any way you like," said the superintendent. He appeared considerably amused at the situation. And Galloway was smiling broadly.

"Then you'd bring out your stolen bars," went on Ward. "And make a big show, and double the value of the stock."

"Ward, you have a decided knack for business."

"You crook!"

Dave stepped between the two men.

"Oh, I'm not going to do anything," declared Ward. "It's enough to know that the sheriff'll have two passengers for Battle Creek."

"Nonsense!" began the superintendent.

The sheriff held up a hand. "You'll both come with me," he said decidedly. Then, as Habbegger seemed again about to expostulate, the other man drew back his coat, showing a star.

It was Ward's turn to smile. He stepped to Betty's side. "Miss Betty made the discovery," he said. "So, of course, she gets the rewards."

Up came Habbegger's head. "The Company will pay no reward," he declared.

"Both rewards," went on Ward. "The State's reward and the Company's reward. Oh, the Board of Directors can't go back on their offer, Mr. Habbegger. What's more—the bars'll go to the Mint. The mine's all right, Betty! The mine's all right!"

The sheriff was speaking. "Habbegger," he said curtly, "—Galloway!" The three went out.



Dr. Oliphant had been testing his heart, lungs, eyes, ears, and nerves

The Real Mr. Mussen

BY WILLIAM JOHNSTON

ILLUSTRATED BY HORACE TAYLOR

TAKE at least a thousand dollars with you."

"What?" gasped Mr. Thomas W. Mussen, straining his ears for the answer, hardly believing that he could have heard aright.

"I said," repeated Dr. Oliphant, "that my orders are, you are to take a month's holiday at once, go to Atlantic City or some such place and take a thousand dollars with you."

"But—but—Henrietta—that is—my wife—"

"I said," interrupted the great nerve specialist, looking at his watch as if to indicate that the consultation was ended, "that you are to go alone."

The tired, little, old man with the muton-chop whiskers sat up straight in the consulting chair where for the last twenty minutes Dr. Oliphant had been testing

his heart, his pulse, his lungs, his eyes, his ears, and his nerves. A look of eager hope flashed into his face but quickly died away. He shivered once or twice and pressed his hand to his forehead. He essayed to speak but his lips quivered so that at first he found it impossible. To the doctor, still studying his caller, a great light came.

"How long is it since you have had a vacation?" he asked.

"I take one every summer—two weeks," stammered Mr. Mussen.

"Where do you go?"

"Wherever Henrietta—that is wherever Mrs. Mussen is."

"What do you do?"

"Nothing—that is, I, we, my wife—we just stay at a hotel."

"How long have you been married?"

"Twenty-two, no, twenty-three years."

"Humph," said the great specialist. "Humph. And you have been doing that every summer for twenty-three years?"

"Yes, sir, that is, no, sir. I mean we used to go to boarding-houses, that is, of course, before the girls grew up."

"Humph," sniffed the doctor. "What's your income, Mr. Mussen?" he snapped after a minute's study of his patient's general appearance.

The little, old man stiffened proudly as he replied:

"Ten thousand a year. I'm treasurer of Mr. Millen's company, you know, secretary and treasurer."

In that one sentence Mr. Mussen summed up all that life had held for him. He and William Millen had come from the same village thirty years before to make their fortunes. Mussen was a steady, conservative plodder, Millen a daring speculator. In five years Millen had a business of his own, in seven he had hired Mussen as his book-keeper. Three years later he had made Mussen his cashier. Twelve years ago, when William Millen became Millen Incorporated, Thomas W. Mussen, as a matter of course, had been given ten shares of stock and made treasurer. His whole business life had been one long round of figures, nothing but figures.

In latter years as the business grew and the figures increased, Mussen had not even read the newspapers. He had found it necessary to save his eyes for the office details that kept piling up on him. But, recently, not only his eyes but his head seemed to be going back on him. He couldn't add. He couldn't subtract. He couldn't multiply. He couldn't remember. Terrified as he was by the plight in which he found himself, he had managed to keep his condition a secret from his wife and for several weeks had hidden it even from the keen-eyed Millen. But Millen at last had found it out.

"It's probably something the matter with your nerves," said Millen. "Go this afternoon and see Dr. Oliphant."

Before he was out of the President's room the stenographer had made an appointment, by telephone, with the famous diagnostician and here he was.

"Mussen,"—the great doctor suddenly dropped his professional manner and leaned forward confidentially—"as man to man, how long is it since you have had twenty-four hours in which you could do exactly as you darned pleased?"

"Ne-never," stammered the surprised patient.

"And how long is it since you have had a ten-dollar note to spend exactly as you darned pleased?"

"Never, never in all my life," was the almost tearful answer.

After that Mussen's story came quickly, easily. Here at last was some one who understood. From the beginning he told it all. When he and Henrietta were married he was only earning twelve hundred a year. It had been close scrimping to get along. He had begun by giving Henrietta his whole weekly wage, and each morning she had given him back one dollar for his carfare and luncheon. He had been raised to fifteen hundred. That was about the time that Mildred was born. Of course, Henrietta needed all the money, so he still had only his one dollar a day. When he began to get two thousand, Ethel was born. At three thousand there were the children's dancing lessons and still one dollar a day for him. At five thousand they had had to take a more expensive apartment that the girls might have proper society—and only one dollar a day for him. Henrietta, to be sure, had bought him his clothes and his shirts and his ties—she had so much more leisure and all the money besides. Time and again he had tried to suggest that he could use more than a dollar but there was always something—some excuse of Henrietta's he could not well gainsay—ball-gowns for the girls, the expenses of a month at Watch Hill—something, always something. Twenty-three years of it and now ten thousand dollars a year income and still that ONE DOLLAR A DAY, doled out to him every morning by his loving wife. When they went away it was she who bought the tickets and paid the hotel bills. If they went to a restaurant to dinner it was she who paid the check.

"I love my wife, Doctor," he concluded plaintively, "and I am very fond

of my children. I begrudge them nothing. Yet at times I think it might have been better if I had retained the management of our family finances."

Dr. Oliphant nodded his head gravely.

"I think it would. The past can't be helped. The future can. My prescription is that you take the afternoon train tomorrow for Atlantic City, that you go alone, that you spend a month there, that you do exactly as you darn please and that you take a thousand dollars with you."

"I can't," gasped Mr. Mussen, shivering again and shriveling up once more into the tired, little, old man who had come into the doctor's office.

"Why not?" snapped Dr. Oliphant.

"They can't spare me at the office."

"They've got to. I'll telephone Millen."

"I haven't a thousand dollars."

"Your wife will give it to you in the morning."

Mr. Mussen shook his head incredulously. Dr. Oliphant might be a great doctor but he didn't know Henrietta.

"Besides," said Mr. Mussen conclusively, "Henrietta will never consent to my going, and particularly to my going alone."

"Oh, yes she will," said Dr. Oliphant with calm, bachelor confidence. "She not only will consent to your going but she will go to the bank to-morrow morning and get you the thousand dollars and see that you don't come back with a cent of it. I'll see Mrs. Mussen myself to-night."

II

Not until the taxicab turned the corner and hid the picture of his wife and daughters in the front windows waving farewell to him, could Thomas W. Mussen realize that it was not all a pleasant dream. Even now that he knew it was true—it must be true, for there were nine one-hundred-dollar bills in his inner waistcoat pocket where Henrietta had pinned them, and a hundred more in smaller bills in his trousers pocket—even now he could not understand how Dr. Oliphant had brought it about.

True to his promise, the evening before

Dr. Oliphant had called at the Mussen home and for nearly two hours had been closeted with Mrs. Mussen. What arguments he used, what explanations he made, what illness he diagnosed, the husband had no idea. As he had come forward to bid the doctor good-night, Mussen noted that Henrietta's face wore an awed look and that there were red circles around her eyes as if she might have been crying.

"It's all right, old chap," Oliphant had said, giving him a hearty handshake.

"Mrs. Mussen understands everything. She will go to the bank the first thing in the morning and get the thousand. I telegraphed Millen. He said you were to take three months off if necessary."

"But," protested Mussen, "you haven't told me what is the matter with me."

"I've told Mrs. Mussen and she realizes how serious it is, or might become. All I am going to tell you is that if you will follow my prescription to the letter for a month you will come back cured."

His wife did not inform him what it was Dr. Oliphant had told her. It seemed to Mussen that the awed look remained on her face until he departed and that it was reflected on the faces of their daughters. His wife, to be sure, had talked a lot to him, but it was about where she had packed his handkerchiefs, and about putting most of his money in the hotel safe until he needed it, and about her regret that the doctor had forbidden him to use his eyes to write to her and had said that all she must expect was an occasional telegram from him. It seemed to Mussen that there was an unusual tenderness in his family's attitude toward him but he had really been so busy planning what he would do if it all came true, that he had thought little about it. He recalled, however, one parting instruction from the doctor.

"Remember, in all things you are to do exactly as you darn please."

The taxicab was passing a cigar store. He rapped sharply on the glass and signed to the chauffeur to stop. Feeling better already, he sprang out and entered the store.

"Some cigars—fifty-centers," he demanded, "good, strong ones."

He grabbed up a handful, tossed out a ten-dollar bill, jammed the change into his pocket without counting it, lighted one cigar, tossed another to the chauffeur and bade him drive to the St. Regis. Leaning back luxuriously on the cushions, he gave himself up unreservedly to enjoying the new sensation he was experiencing.

A sudden thought came to him. He reached into the inner pocket where Henrietta had pinned the nine one-hundred-dollar bills and managed to unclasp the safety-pin. Merrily flipping the pin out the window he jammed this money carelessly into his trousers pocket with the rest, and drawing forth a schedule began studying the trains. Yes, there was another one later in the afternoon, and still another one at eight. There was plenty of time. Why not?

So much pleasure did he get out of his fifty-cent cigar that he almost regretted

it when the St. Regis was reached. Henrietta always had considered smoking a useless extravagance and had not hesitated to say so—frequently. He did not agree with her. Out of his dollar a day he always had bought two two-for-a-quarter cigars, one of which he smoked after breakfast on his way to the office and the other after luncheon. Needless to say he never smoked at home, but for years and years he had cherished a desire to smoke a fifty-cent cigar and he was finding realization even better than expectation.

As he climbed out at the hotel he perceived that the taxicab already registered one-sixty, and he was about to dismiss it when he remembered how often he had said to himself:

"How nice it must be to keep a taxi waiting and never care how much it is going to cost."

"Wait," he ordered and disappeared



His whole life had been one long round of figures

within the hotel. When he emerged, half-an-hour later, the chauffeur hardly recognized him. His mutton-chops were gone.

At one stroke he had satisfied two ambitions. He never had liked wearing side-whiskers, but Henrietta, years ago, had insisted that they gave him an appearance of age and dignity that well suited his business. Even when they had become gray she refused to assent to their disappearance. Often and often as he pulled a razor over his angular face he had thought how nice it must feel to be shaved in the barber shop of some luxurious hotel—but such things are not for a husband and father who has only one dollar a day to spend on himself.

The glimpse he had of his face in a mirror so delighted him that he decided to resort to still more daring measures. The chauffeur's orders this time were to take him to a furnishing store. When he emerged from this, Henrietta, wife to him though she had been for twenty-three years, would never have known him, dressed after his heart's desire—a long suppressed desire at that.

A foolish little gray hat was cocked rakishly over one eye. He was wearing instead of the somber black that long had been his habiliment, a gray-checked suit that trumpeted his coming. From the center of a brilliant necktie flashed a reconstructed sapphire that would well become a side-show barker. On the feet of him who hitherto had worn unsightly gaiters were the smartest of low shoes, over gay silk socks, fortunately perhaps, concealed from general view by neat gray spats. One of the clerks deposited beside him in the taxicab a brand new bag, the weight of which betokened that he had still other clothes and ties to wear.

Grinning as he thought of journeys with Henrietta and the girls when he had struggled along in the rear of his family with two or three huge suit-cases, he now gleefully turned over his luggage to a porter and found new joy in bestowing a half-dollar tip on the man. Hardly had the train left the station before he was pressing the button he found at the side of his parlor-car seat. The first time it was for a bottle of mineral water. The

second time it was for a telegraph blank.

"What's the most expensive hotel in Atlantic City?" he asked the porter, and on being informed, wrote:

Reserve me best parlor, bed-room
and bath for probably a month. Arrive
to-night.

Willis Mussen.

He put the "probably" in to make sure he had over ten words without bothering to count them. Why he signed it "Willis Mussen" instead of his usual signature "Thomas W. Mussen," he couldn't have told himself. It was probably due to a subconscious notion that he was entering upon a new life and might as well have a new name. He slipped the porter a two-dollar bill, bidding him keep the change, and was rewarded by hearing:

"Thank you, sah, Mr. Mussen; I'll send this right away."

As the porter pronounced his name, two other occupants of the parlor car pricked up their ears and began to study him with great interest, but he was entirely oblivious to their inspection. He was busy planning things that he was going to do in the next four weeks—the weeks when he was to do exactly as he darn pleased. When he tired of this pleasant occupation he began straightening out the crumpled bills in his pocket.

He was somewhat amazed to find that of the thousand with which he started two hours ago he had already spent two hundred. In fact all he had now was eight one hundred dollar bills and some loose silver, but he refused to let such a trifle disturb him.

"What of it?" he said to himself. "I'm feeling better already—much better."

When at length the train pulled in at Mr. Mussen that stepped from the coach Mr. Mussen that stepped from the train—that beckoned a taxi for even the short ride to the be-gilded hostelry he had chosen—that nonchalantly summoned the house valet to perform the trivial labor of unpacking his bag. His apartment, he discovered, was quite the *dernier cri* as regards those little comfort-giving devices peculiar to the ultra-modern hotel; he explored their several mysteries

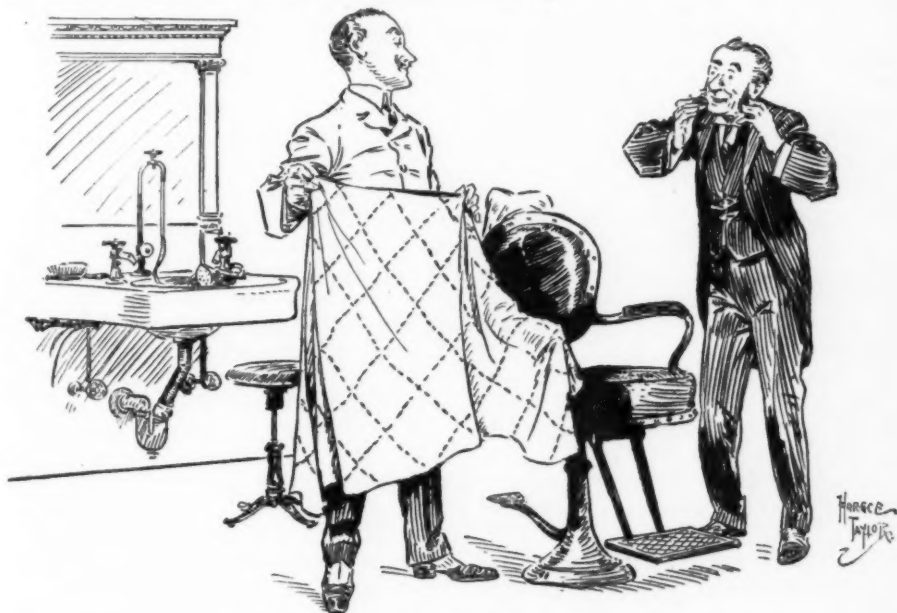
for a moment or two; and then, undressing, he attired himself in pajamas—those lavender silk pajamas which he had coveted for years and at last to-day had complacently purchased. Then he indulged in one last, Lucullan luxury: he ordered a *recherché* little supper sent up to him; and only then, when he had feasted delicately, did he offer himself to the seductions of the kind god Somnas.

"It must be some mistake," said Mr. Mussen doubtfully. "I don't—that is, I seldom—"

"Hyah's the card," said the bell-boy.

With interest Mr. Mussen examined the bit of pasteboard. There it was plainly written right before his eyes.

For Mr. Willis Mussen, Room 79, with the compliments of James X. Hardy.



He never had liked wearing side whiskers, but Henrietta—

III

A gentle tapping that seemed to come from a great distance awoke Mr. Mussen the next morning. From force of habit he lay with closed eyes, waiting to hear Henrietta's firm voice say:

"Come, Thomas, it is time to get up."

Again he heard the rapping, this time apparently nearer. He opened his eyes, and, with a start, looked about him. A night's sleep had almost obliterated from his mind the fact that he was occupying the best suite in the most expensive hotel in Atlantic City. Again came the rapping and now he got up and opened the door.

A smiling bell-boy deposited on the floor a basket of champagne—pints.

"For Mr. Mussen," he said, "with the compliments of Mr. Hardy."

It couldn't be a mistake. He was certainly Willis Mussen, and this was Room 79. But who was Mr. Hardy and why should he be sending him champagne? He would endeavor to ascertain as soon as he had had breakfast.

"Maybe you'd like a glass of this right now. I'll get some ice," said the bell-boy.

"No—that is, yes, I believe I would," said Mr. Mussen.

If William Millen, who had known Thomas W. Mussen for over forty years, had been asked if he ever drank, he would have said, without hesitation, "No."

If Henrietta Claussen Mussen, who had been married to him for twenty-three years, had been asked if he ever drank, she would have answered with emphasis, "No."

If Thomas W. Mussen himself, twenty-four hours before, had been asked if he drank, he would have answered without prevarication, "NO."

As a matter of fact Mr. Mussen probably had not had over six drinks of any sort in all his life. Certainly he had never drunk any champagne. On his dollar a day he could not afford to buy liquor, and on special occasions, as when some one offered to buy him a drink, he could not afford to take it because Henrietta would have smelled it on his breath. Yet this life of abstinence did not prevent him from often thinking how pleasant it must be, when one woke up tired, to take a glass of champagne in the morning.

"It's doctor's orders anyhow," he comforted his conscience, as he recklessly gulped down the contents of the goblet the bell-boy handed him. "He said I was to do just as I darn please, and I please to drink champagne."

He was rather surprised to find that he didn't like the taste of the bubbly liquor, and contented himself with one glass, but as he dressed he was conscious of a slight sense of exhilaration and of a better appetite for breakfast than he had had for a long time.

And how he did enjoy breakfast! He let the waiter put two lumps of sugar in his coffee, and then reached over for the sugar-bowl himself and took two more. There was no Henrietta there to say reprovingly, "I have put TWO lumps in already, Thomas." He ordered his eggs hard-boiled. Henrietta thought hard-boiled eggs indigestible. He ordered a steak done very rare. Henrietta held to the belief that red meat bred rheumatism and never permitted him to eat it. After he had breakfasted, he lighted one of his fifty-cent cigars, bought a paper and sat there before his second and always forbidden cup of over-sweetened coffee, thoroughly enjoying himself.

"Mr. Mussen, Mr. Mussen, Mr. Willis Mussen!"

Blushing with proud self-consciousness he hailed the passing page. Here was another new sensation. He never before had been paged in a hotel and he relished the experience.

"I am Mr. Mussen," he said with affected composure. "What is it?"

"Your automobile is waiting at the side entrance."

"What's that?" gasped Mr. Mussen, and once more the boy repeated his remark.

"I'll be—that is, in a minute I'll be out," said Mr. Mussen.

Things were moving so rapidly he could hardly keep up with them. He had not believed in Atlantic City as a possibility for him, yet here he was. He hadn't believed that he would have a thousand dollars, yet he had it in his pocket—at least some of it. He hadn't believed Henrietta would let him go away without her, yet here he was alone. He hadn't believed that the champagne was meant for him, yet he could still feel it pleasantly tingling within him. It was preposterous to believe that there was an automobile waiting for him, but in the face of all the miracles he had experienced since his call on Dr. Oliphant, it was at least worth while seeing about it.

As he issued from the side entrance the page who had summoned him sprang forward and whispered to the starter, "Mr. Mussen's car." Instantly, a huge touring car shot forward, and as it came to a stop the chauffeur respectfully touched his cap and asked, "Where to, sir?"

"I don't—that is—any place for an hour's ride," said Mr. Mussen, climbing recklessly into the car.

He knew it wasn't his and couldn't by any possible chance be intended for him, but with eight hundred dollars in his pocket and with a goblet of champagne in his stomach he didn't care. He would take a ride anyhow and see how it felt to pretend for an hour that the motor *was* his. A remark of the chauffeur as they stopped to let a car pass at a crossing perplexed him.

"It's a fine machine you've got, Mr. Mussen."

"I don't quite understand about this," he replied. "Whose is it?"

"My orders were to tell you that this car was at your service without charge at all times during your stay in Atlantic City."



He thought of journeys with Henrietta and the girls

"But, but, who gave you the orders?" asked the puzzled Mr. Mussen.

"It was Mr. Wharton O'Connor, who made the arrangement," said the chauffeur. "He's staying at your hotel."

"Oh, yes, I see," replied Mr. Mussen, but he didn't, at all.

Even when, on his return to the hotel, he made the acquaintance not only of Mr. Wharton O'Connor, but also of the Mr. James X. Hardy who had sent him the champagne, both incidents remained unexplained. The two men, whom he recognized as having been fellow passengers in the train the night before, seemed to be old acquaintances for they were sitting on the porch when he returned in the auto and hastened to make themselves known to him again.

Acquaintances though they undoubtedly were they did not seem to be exactly good friends, though they vied with each other in seeing who could provide the most entertainment for Mr. Mussen, not only for the rest of that day but for a

merry round of days. Sometimes it seemed to Mr. Mussen's unsophisticated mind as if each of them were afraid to leave him alone in the other's company. If Mr. Hardy took him to luncheon, Mr. O'Connor insisted on accompanying them. When Mr. O'Connor invited Mr. Mussen to dine with him, Mr. Hardy refused to be left out. Mr. O'Connor taught Mr. Mussen to play billiards and played with him for as high as a hundred dollars a game, and strange to say Mr. Mussen always won. It was Mr. Hardy who counseled a plunge on a certain stock which he said would go up twenty-five points in three days. It did and as Mr. Mussen had plunged to the extent of his entire capital he found himself richer by several thousand dollars. It was Mr. Hardy who showed him how to go "short" and win several thousand dollars more as the stock, after its spectacular ascent, dropped quickly back to its former level. From morning till night both men managed to be with him all the time, each

protesting vigorously if he tried to spend a cent. They wouldn't even let him pay his hotel bill. At the end of the first week he found a receipted statement in his box, and at the end of the second week, another.

Why O'Connor and Hardy devoted so much time to him and spent so much money on him was a perpetual poser to Mr. Mussen. At first he had suspected that they were friends of Dr. Oliphant with whom the physician had entered into a pleasant conspiracy for his entertainment. Judicious inquiry, however, elicited the perplexing fact that neither of them had ever heard of Dr. Oliphant. He ascertained, too, that they did not know Mr. Millen. What their business was he could not guess, for each of them apparently was strongly averse to mentioning business in the presence of the other, though from chance remarks Mr. Mussen in some way gathered that both were interested in something about rail-

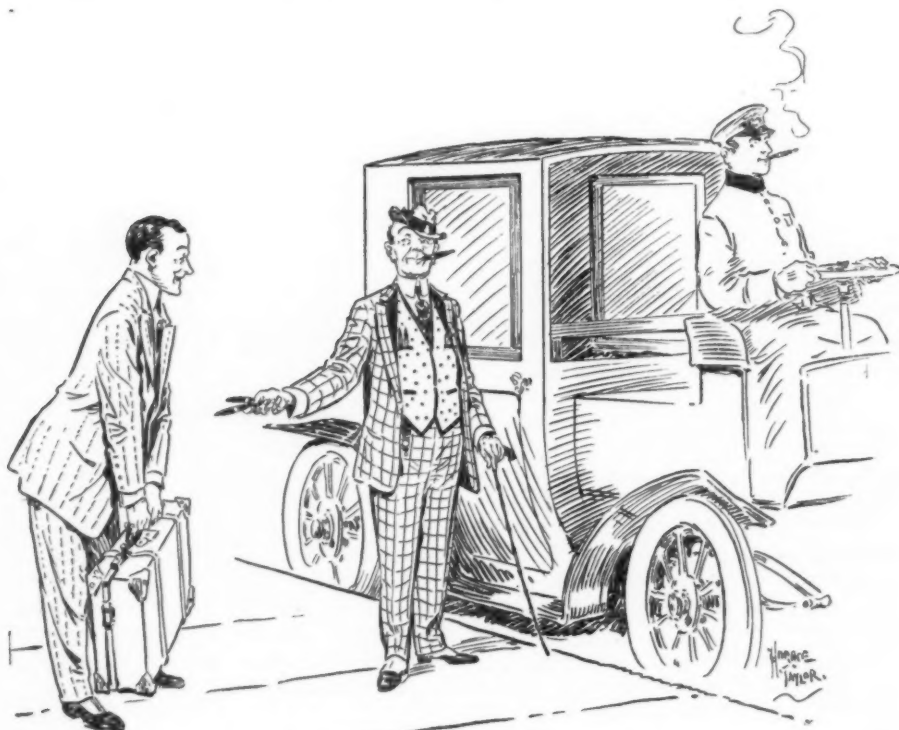
roads or railroad equipment, but why they should be interested in *him*—that was the problem.

All he knew at the end of the sixteenth day of his visit to Atlantic City was that he had experienced the grandest time that had ever before fallen to his lot—dining, automobiling, theatre-going, billiard playing. And he had found time to send to Henrietta only one brief telegram which merely said: "Feeling much better. Love to all." Moreover, instead of the paltry eight hundred dollars he had had when he arrived, thanks to his winnings at billiards and in the stock market, he was carrying around in his pockets at the present time over eight thousand dollars!

And the next morning he woke up.

IV

It was the morning of the seventeenth day. Mr. Mussen was sitting on the side



The weight of the bag betokened that he had other clothes and ties to wear



"He said I was to do just as I darned pleased"

of the bed. In one hand he held the glass of champagne with which now he habitually began the day. On the counterpane beside him was his bank-roll which he had just completed counting. The big automobile as usual was waiting for him downstairs. Mr. O'Connor had invited him to luncheon. Mr. Hardy was to be his host at dinner.

Yet Mr. Mussen, studying once more the paper in his hand, groaned.

It was one of the Atlantic City papers, bought the afternoon before, and which he had flung unread on the floor of his room. As he finished counting his money the name "Mussen" on the front page had caught his eye. Wondering what the item was, he had reached down for the paper and this is what he read:

RAILROAD MAGNATE DUE TO-MORROW

Mr. Willis Mussen, chairman of the Purchasing Committee of the Great Northeastern Railway, will arrive here to-morrow for a week's stay. Mr. Mussen has come East to arrange for the electrification of the entire Great Northeastern system, the contracts for which will exceed \$50,000,000. It was expected that Mr. Mussen would arrive here about two weeks ago but he was detained by business in Chicago.

Mr. Mussen groaned again.

At last the mystery of his elaborate entertainment was solved. There was another Willis Mussen, a Mussen who amounted to something, a Mussen who was going to spend fifty millions. O'Connor and Hardy, he realized, were representatives of rival electrical companies who hoped to secure the Great Northeastern contracts. They had mistaken him, Thomas W. Mussen, for the great Willis Mussen. It dawned on him that Hardy had purposely been letting him win at billiards. He even began to doubt if he really had made all that money in stocks. As he thought of how quickly he would be deprived of the big automobile, of how ignominiously he would be deserted by both Hardy and O'Connor the minute they found he was not the real Mr. Mussen, he groaned again. He wished he knew what to do. If there were only some one to advise him, to extricate him from the humiliating and ridiculous situation in which he found himself. If Henrietta were only here!

There came a sharp rap on the door.

"Come in," he called, thinking it was a bell-boy.

The door swung open. Before him stood Mrs. Thomas W. Mussen.

In one disapproving sweep her eyes took in the half-emptied basket of champagne, the foolish little gray hat, the noisy checked suit, the gay tie, the silk hose, the spats.

"Thomas Mussen," she said, firmly, "there's been enough of this foolishness. You pack right up and come home with me."

"Yes, my dear," he replied meekly, suddenly become the tired little old man again, and striving, as he answered, to slide along the bed so that he could sit on the pile of bills before she discovered it. But she was too quick for him.

"Give me that," she commanded, holding out her hand, "all of it."

"Yes, my dear," said Thomas W. Mussen.

As she began to count the money he hastened to pack, struggling within himself for courage to make a last stand. Several times he stopped and straight-

ened up to look at her as she sat there counting—"Five thousand six hundred and fifty, five thousand seven hundred, five thousand seven hundred and fifty—"

Not until she had stowed all his money safely away did he muster up courage enough to speak. Drawing himself up to the full extent of his five feet four he said:

"Henrietta, I'll consent to come home on just one condition."

She glared at him for fully a minute before she condescended to reply.

"Well?"

His courage was fast failing him. He had intended to demand at least two dollars a day.

"Henrietta," he faltered, "I'll come home, if—that is—can I—may I have a dollar-and-a-quarter a day for my luncheons?"

"We'll see," said Mrs. Mussen with tightening lips.



"Thomas Mussen" she said firmly, "there's been enough of this foolishness!"



Miss Gertrude Hoffmann who is dancing with the Russian Ballet at The Winter Garden, New York

Photograph by White, New York

Midsummer in the Theatres

by Louis V. De Foe

SOMETHING new, absorbing and extremely artistic, has at last emerged in summer theatricals in New York. "*La Saison des Ballets Russe*," as it is officially, if somewhat affectedly, called, has easily taken the lead over all other indoor entertainments. Nothing quite so elaborate in the way of a hot weather stage production has been attempted before. Despite the ingenuity of some of their shows, the roof gardens have never so much as approached it.

The project of duplicating the Russian ballet has been simmering since the geniuses of the dancing art from the imperial opera houses of St. Petersburg and Moscow created their first furore in Paris nearly three years ago. But in the interim no impresario could be found

who was venturesome enough to assume the great financial risk. The reason for the general reluctance is easily explained. Like pantomime, its sister art, the ballet has never been fully understood or appreciated in America. An earlier generation developed a passing interest in mute drama interpreted by the dance, but for the most part the ballet has been considered an appendage of grand opera and of such spectacular productions as are annually to be found at the Hippodrome.

Lately, however, we have been unconsciously educating ourselves in the higher forms of the dancing art. Miss Adeline Genée, during her last three visits, acquainted us with its possibilities and that pair of ethereal geniuses, Mme. Anna



Photograph by White, New York
Gertrude Hoffmann in the ballet of "Scheherazade"
as performed by the Russian Ballet

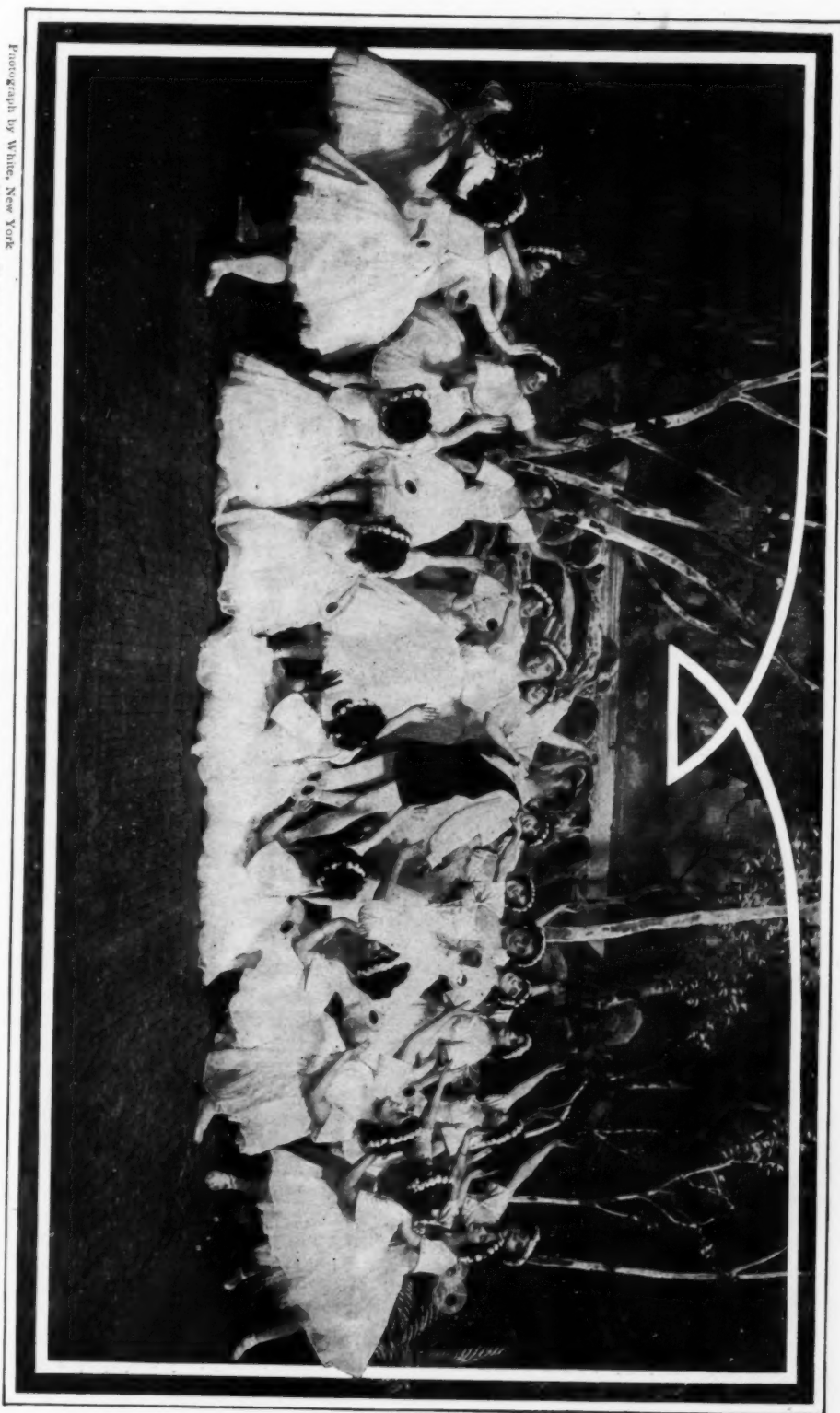
Pavlowa and M. Michael Mordkin, illustrated its still higher development. Finally, the growing taste in New York for every kind of continental entertainment, which encouraged the building of the Folies Bergere, became a sufficient incentive for the organization of a Russian ballet with a personnel of a dozen soloists and a *corps* of more than one hundred *coryphées*. The productions were at first designed for the Metropolitan Opera House, but, on account of its airiness, the Winter Garden was chosen instead, and with the lifting of the curtain this comparatively new playhouse finds itself on the crest of prosperity.

It must not be assumed that the new company is the original Imperial Russian Ballet which created in Europe a new popular demand for the art of the dance. The Czar's dancers are now appearing in Rome, and some of them are to come to America next winter. But all the soloists and most of the *coryphées* in the New York organization are graduates as well from the imperial operas of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and they have brought to this country excellent reputations.

For instance, there is Mlle. Lydia Lopoukova, a little bounding sprite, who danced at the Imperial Opera House in St. Petersburg a year and who came to this country originally with M. Alexander Volinine of the Imperial Opera House at Moscow. Then there are M. Theodore Kosloff, also of the Moscow opera, and M. Alexis Bulgakow, *premier mime* of the St. Petersburg imperial opera. Some of the other soloists are Mlle. Marie Baldina, who danced with M. Kosloff in Moscow; M. Alexis Kosloff of the same institution; Mlle. Cochín, a brunette beauty who, in private life, is the Princess Chirinsky; M. Nicolas Solanikow, a ballet mime of the St. Petersburg opera, and perhaps a dozen other stars. The *corps* is about evenly divided be-

Photograph by White, New York

Alexander Volinine with the coryphees in the ballet, "Les Sylphides," as performed at New York's Winter Garden by the Russian Ballet



tween Russians and Americans. The latter do not suffer severely by comparison with the former, for they have undergone rigorous training under the supervision of the foreign artists.

The *répertoire* of the company is said to be sufficient to last throughout the summer season. At present the production comprises three separate ballets, "Cleopatra," a terpsichorean drama danced to a superb Bacchanale composed by A. Arensky; "Les Sylphides," a charming sylvan ballet of more conventional type and interpretive of dance music composed by Chopin, and "Scheherazade," a passionate, barbaric, Persian tragedy set to a famous suite by Rimsky-Korsakow. A symphony orchestra is needed to do full justice to the music of all three ballets, though the Winter Garden's orchestra of seventy-five pieces is of fair quality.

"Cleopatra" is easily recognized as a pantomimic version of M. Theophile Gautier's "Une Nuit de Cleopatra." It is the story of the young Egyptian archer who deserted his betrothed under the spell of the Serpent of Old Nile and pays for her embraces by drinking the cup of poison in the morning. The spectacle unfortunately reeks with carnality and sensuality. Nothing is left to the imagination in the interpretation of the *Queen* by Miss Gertrude Hoffmann. She is financially interested in the company and feels that she must take part in the performances although she does little dancing and is overshadowed by the Russian ballerinas of the cast. The æsthetic value of the spectacle lies in the splendid dancing of Mlle. Lopoukova, who leads the Bacchanale, and in the Dance of the Hours. Eloquent miming is done by M. Theodore Kosloff and Mlle. Baldina as the archer and his sweetheart. Although the artistic value of "Cleopatra" is undeniable, I do not believe that its literal sensuality will long be tolerated by the public.

In contrast to "Cleopatra" the ballet, "Les Sylphides," comes as a refreshing zephyr from the fields. The scene is a cool glade in the forest where myriads of sylphs become visions of Chopin's fancy, the six movements culminating in a Waltz Brilliant in which Mlle. Lo-

poukova, a veritable fluffball of agile grace, bounds to the fore and gives a beautiful exhibition of her lithe art with the assistance of M. Volinine, whose solo dancing in the Mazourka has established him as the most graceful male dancer who has appeared on the New York stage. These two performers have been acclaimed nightly, but great credit is also due to Mlle. Baldina and Mlle. Cochin, who dance charmingly in the Prelude.

The final ballet is "Scheherazade" which, in its Persian trappings, is perhaps the most sumptuously staged and costumed of all. The *King* of the Indies goes away on a hunting trip and the *Sultanas* of the harem improve his absence by persuading the *Grand Eunuch* to throw open the palace doors to their Arab lovers. Then, through a golden door, comes the armored paramour of *Zobeide*, the *King's* favorite wife. The revelry which follows is blinding in its passionate abandon, until the *King*, returning unexpectedly, orders that all be put to the sword. The unfaithful *Zobeide* kills herself with her dagger to avoid the worse death by strangulation to which her enraged liege lord has condemned her.

The Slav temperament of the dancers lends itself to the abandonment of this tragic story. There are, however, occasional languorous passages of great beauty. Miss Hoffmann again writhes in the character of *Zobeide*, but the real dancing is accomplished by Mlle. Lopoukova, Mlle. Cochin and Mlle. Baldina as the *Odalises*. Acting of a high order, and entirely in pantomime, is accomplished by M. Alexis Burgakow as the *King* of the Indies and M. Nicolas Solanikow as his princely brother, *Shah Zeman*.

The Russian Ballets have been produced on such an ambitious scale that, when they leave the Winter Garden, it will be hard to find stages large enough to accommodate them. Wherever they go they will be hailed as a great novelty. But I fear that they will detract from the prestige of the ballet spectacles which have been projected by other managers for the coming winter season. On the other hand, they may prove valu-

Mlle. Lopoukova and Theodore Kosloff in the ballet of
"Cleopatra" as given by the Russian Ballet

Photograph by White, New York





Photograph
by Gross, Chicago

Robert McWade, Sr., who appeared
as *Father Paul* in "*Youth*"

Photograph
by White, New York

Louise Wood who appeared as
Anna in "*Youth*"

able to their successors by opening the eyes of the public to what the dance can accomplish when approached as a fine art.

AS was to be expected, the theatrical season has not been allowed to come to its end without one of those experiments in educational drama which for many years have been the harbingers of its closing days. Such attempts to acquaint theatregoers with plays which have been overlooked or neglected by the avowedly commercial producers always spring from the same set of motives and they are invariably championed in New York by the same group of enthusiasts. They are the result of a very positive although mistaken belief that the mind cannot be intellectually stimulated except in an atmosphere of gloom and that the plays which develop normally from the problems of contemporary American life are not likely to prompt an exercise of finer philosophic thought.

For the purpose of affording theatregoers a little of this needed intellectual training, "*Jugend*," one of the earlier works of the German realist, Mr. Max Halbe, has been set into English by Mr. Herman Bernstein under the title of "*Youth*" and produced by a fairly competent cast. The principal endeavor

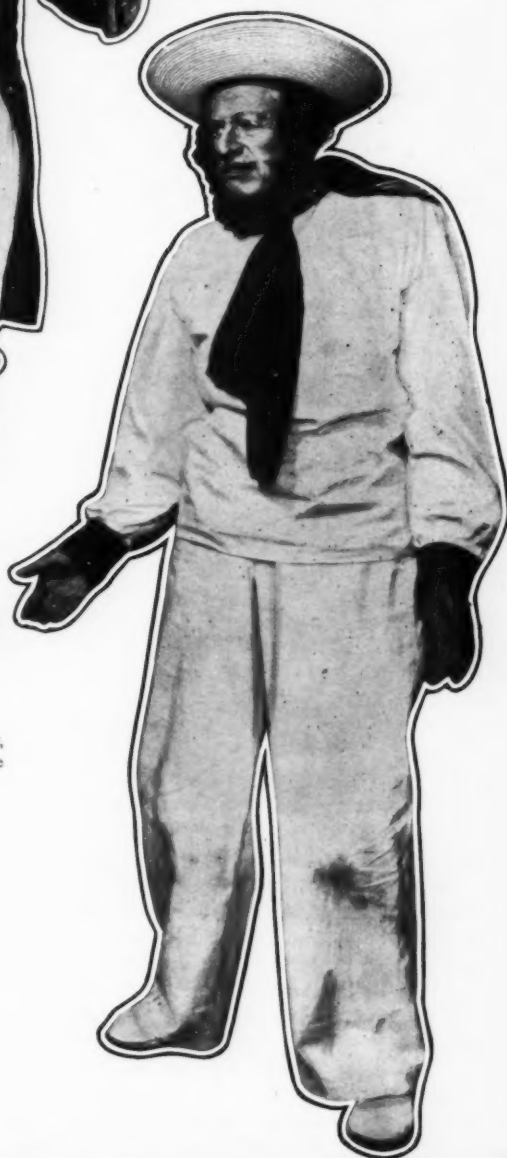
seems to be to permit no ray of sunshine to illumine the stage, notwithstanding that the characters talk almost constantly of the joy of living and of the glories of the freedom of the human will. But alas for these vagaries harbored by its pair of young lovers who believe they have found their emancipation in the unrestrained exercise of their amorous impulses! Their pursuit of the ideals which are ever just beyond them leads downward to an abyss of gloom and their happiness at the end is turned to tragedy.

A decade or two ago, when the grip of realism was tightening upon German dramaturgy, Max Halbe was hailed as one of the champions of the new school. His drama, "*Youth*," written somewhat later, was considered in advance of its day and it enjoyed a vogue all over Germany which compared favorably with the attention given to the plays of Ibsen and Hauptmann, although his work, as a philosophical study of life, had little of the profundity or power of the two older writers whose leadership he followed. "*Youth*" even reached the German theatres of this country. It might have been translated into English at any time in the interim had there been a reasonable prospect that it would meet with the sympathy of our public. Mme.



De Wolf Hopper as *Dick Deadeye*,
in the revival of "Pinafore"

Photograph by White, New York



Photograph by White, New York

Henry E. Dixey as *Sir Joseph Porter*,
in the revival of "Pinafore" at the
New York Casino

Bertha Kalich contemplated producing it at one time, but she wisely desisted and it has remained neglected and almost forgotten until lately, when some of the educational theorists suddenly discovered in it new food for thought.

The single scene of its three acts is the house of a parish priest in a small village of eastern Germany. Its characters are *Father Paul*, an amiable, liberal-minded old priest who loves life and pleasure; *Anna*, the high-spirited illegitimate daughter of his dead sister; *Amandus*, her imbecile step-brother; *Gregory*, a solemn, morbid chaplain who seems to have not as much as a drop of the milk of human kindness in his shriveled soul, and *Marushka*, a peasant servant.

The conversation in the opening act uncovers the contention in the family which centers around the character of *Anna*. She is an impetuous, sunny-tempered girl who has inherited the unrestrained impulses of her mother's nature and these the generous, kindly old priest approves as he looks forward to her happy marriage. *Gregory*, the chaplain, takes another view, however. His conviction is that the sins of the parent are visited upon the children and he argues constantly that *Anna* must become a nun in order to escape the temptations of the world and expiate the sin of her dead mother. The imbecile boy is mentally capable of forming no opinions whatever; he is a noisy, doddering youth who exhibits at intervals an uncanny kind of maniacal cunning.

On the anniversary of *Anna's* mother's death, when *Gregory* is more than usually insistent upon putting into effect his convent plan for *Anna*, word comes of the intended visit of *Hans*, her second cousin. He is on his way to enter the university at Heidelberg and is eager to renew his friendship with the playmate of his childhood days. His arrival brings a new happiness into *Anna's* restricted life, and it affords pleasure for the kindly old priest, although it instantly arouses new misgivings in the mind of the uncompromising, ascetic chaplain. His doctrine of the inherited sins of the parent, he insists, is now about to be put to a practical test.

Hans proves to be an impulsive, romantic young fellow whose frankly affectionate attitude toward his second cousin quickly disarms suspicion, although it strangely arouses the enmity of the skulking imbecile who has regarded the visitor from the first as his natural enemy and has blindly resented the new attention that is being bestowed upon the girl. The chaplain, after sounding again his doleful warnings, pretends to relax his vigilance and the young people, left to their own devices, begin to cultivate each other's companionship to the fullest—which consists largely in discussions as to what true happiness in life really means.

In the few days of *Hans's* visit this friendship ripens into intimacy and then is lost that restraint which is supposed to govern the relations of unmarried people. At last their confessions reveal how helplessly they have drifted upon the current of their feelings and how deep is the abyss on the brink of which they suddenly find themselves.

The disclosure is made by the half-witted *Amandus*, who has detected *Anna* in the act of entering *Hans's* room in the early hours of the morning. This revelation is seized by the chaplain as proof of the truth of his theories of hereditary sin, but the old priest, chagrined at the mistake in his calculations, rounds on him with the argument that he, *Gregory*, is really morally responsible for the girl's downfall as he has kept the circumstance of her illegitimacy and of her mother's unfortunate example always uppermost in her mind.

To repair the damage that has been wrought it is decided that *Hans* shall finish his university education and then return to make *Anna* his wife, a requirement to which the willful, impulsive young student eagerly assents; but at this point the pitiful story is suddenly cut short by *Amandus*, who insanely attempts to shoot his step-sister's betrayer but succeeds instead in sending a bullet through *Anna's* heart. With little further comment the curtain falls.

A number of lessons which are philosophical and practical, as well as religious, moral and sexual, may be drawn from this unnecessarily gloomy tragedy



Photograph by White, New York

George J. McFarlane as *Capt. Corcoran*, and Marie Cahill as *Little Buttercup* in the revival of "Pinafore"

of unfettered impulses, but the most obvious one seems to be that the restraining presence of a chaplain is advisable when the love affairs of too ardent young people are in progress. This is the one "educational" value which the play pos-

sesses for American audiences though it is hardly sufficient to justify its translation and production in English. Otherwise the work violates almost every tenet of the "well-made" play—a term that stirs the ire of the educational cult—for

it is practically without movement or progressive conflict during its first two acts, while the third is principally given to moralizing and preaching.

The sincerity with which "Youth" is approached by its producers and actors partly justifies its performance. It has also commanded a certain amount of attention in that rather numerous class which is willing to lend its support to almost any form of exotic drama, providing it happens to be gloomy in theme and extreme in its application to the normal affairs of every-day men and women.

THAT widely extended cosmopolitanism which is one of the advantages of the stage in New York—and at the same time is one of its disadvantages, since its effect is to divert attention from the native drama and thus retard its development—has resulted in a somewhat belated first acquaintance with contemporary Bohemian dramaturgy. The play is "The Clouds" by Mr. Jaroslav Knapil, who contributes regularly and, it is said, successfully to theatres of Prague. As the drama has reached the western world it contains possibly all its original essence, although it has passed through the hands of Mr. Charles Recht as translator and has been put into practical acting form by Mr. Charles Swickard.

"The Clouds" is distinctly lyrical in tone and it betrays also the long-drawn conversational tendencies peculiar to the European continental stage. It may not be quite fair to compare it with "Seven Sisters" by Mr. Ferencz Herczegh, which has recently furnished us an example of the Hungarian playwriting art, but their violent contrast would indicate that the stage is approached in a much more jovial spirit in Buda-Pesth than in Prague, notwithstanding that the art instincts of the two peoples are much the same.

There are involved only a quintet of characters, but they exhibit clearly contrasted traits. The *mise-en-scene* is the home and garden of *Father Matoush*, a village priest, whose nephew, *Andreas Kocian*, in obedience to his mother's will, is preparing to follow in the same narrow calling. He has suffered a serious

illness and has been consecrated to the Church as his family's thank-offering for his recovery.

Into this fervid circle is suddenly projected *Maria Zeman*, a companion of *Andreas's* childhood days. In later years they have been separated. She has gone out into the world, tasted of its joys and has entered upon a brilliant career as a popular actress in Prague. Returning to her native Bohemian village on a vacation, she encounters her old playmate and sets about to save him from the dull life which has been chosen for him. *Andreas* combats all her arguments in favor of individual freedom with fervid religious zeal, but gradually relaxes his defenses when he feels the re-awakening of their early love. At last he is converted to *Maria's* more liberal views of life and, in defiance of his mother's wishes and his uncle's counsel, resolves to throw off the shackles of a priestly career.

By this time *Maria* has begun to perceive that the youth is unfitted for the sphere she has planned for him and her efforts are turned abruptly toward reconciling him with his lot. The world, she reflects, is not for weaklings but for the resolute, and the Church is ever a haven for the pursuit of beautiful ideals. Having partly undone the mischief she has caused, she deserts the theological student in his dilemma and effaces herself from the play with the aid of a physician who typifies the spirit of materialism and is the most vigorous and refreshing character in the play. The final scene offers the hint that *Andreas* will continue in the vocation which has been arbitrarily chosen for him and thus the situation in the end remains the same as in the beginning.

There is surely nothing new in this conflict between worldliness and sanctity and there is also not much that is interesting in the strategical plan on which the battle is waged. A naïve conclusion is to be drawn from the play which manifestly is not the one that the author intends. It is, in effect, that the Church is the safest profession for persons who are either deficient in moral stamina or do not know their own minds.

These samples of contemporaneous

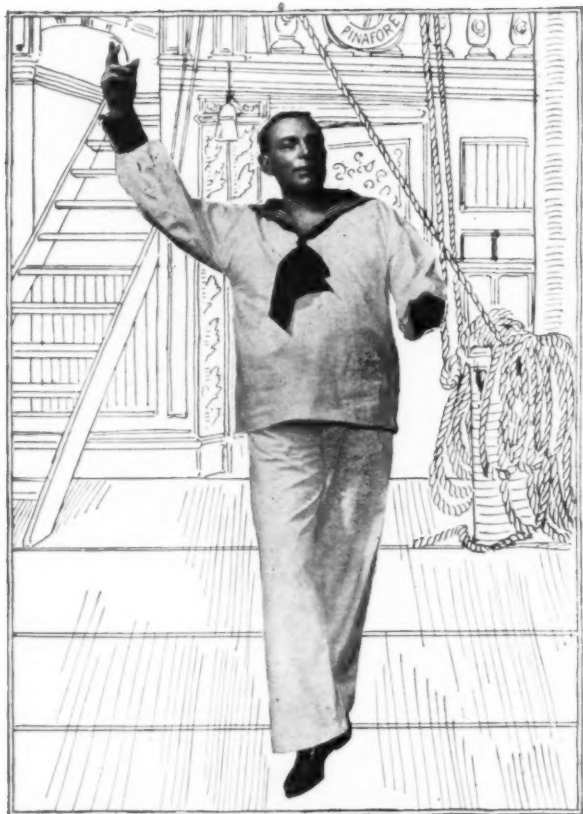


Photograph by White, New York

Alice Brady as *Hebe* and Louise Gunning as *Josephine* in the New York Casino revival of "Pinafore"

European dramaturgy are not without their uses although they contribute little, ordinarily, to the gaieties of theatre-going. To place them in comparison with the live dramas by our own best authors is to furnish convincing proof that play-

writing in America does not need to lean upon the drama of foreign civilizations for its inspiration or betterment. We surely have much to learn, but we will prosper best without the help of continental instructors.



Photograph by White, New York

Eugene Cowles as *Bobstay* in the New York Casino all-star revival of "*Pinafore*"

THE revival of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta out of the active dramatic season bears on its surface, even when accomplished with the aid of an all-star cast, so many appearances of an attempt to make bricks without straw that comment of such an event in *THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE* is undertaken with no slight degree of misgiving. Readers must not fall into the error of supposing that this project at the New York Casino is a mere effort to spin the light musical season into the summer. Such may have been the intent when the first revival of "*The Mikado*" was made on short notice a year ago. However, the wide approval which followed the attempt, coupled with the unexpected financial returns which resulted from it, turned what first was an adventure into a settled policy. Gilbert and Sullivan at the Casino is now an established summer institution,

and it comes as honestly by its artistic vogue as grand opera at the Metropolitan in the winter.

Does "*Pinafore*" sound attractive, or does it impress itself rather as a symptom of mid-summer madness born of a lack of newer entertainment? Before answering, reflect for a moment on the eagerness with which this operatic straggler from the late seventies has been received in the hot month of June!

Even at a grand opera scale of prices the attendance on the opening night of the revival was so tremendous that each of the eighteen hundred seats might have been sold twice. Weeks have lengthened into a month and still the nightly storming of the box-office continues. A revival of "*Patience*" which was to have followed the old nautical satire, has had to be postponed. So keen is the interest in a piece which was familiar two genera-

John Slavin as *Barry*, Laura Jaffray as *Sophie* and Cyril Chadwick as *Lord Winchester* in the revival of "The Country Girl"



Photograph by Hall, New York

tions ago that its music is again being heard in the hotels and cafés.

The explanation of this midsummer success is not difficult. "Pinafore," beneath its surface of satirical frivolity, is tinged with rare genius and as such it has resisted the mildew of time. Its humor is as alive, its satire is as penetrating and its fun is as incessant to-day as when it was first created, and possibly it is better appreciated and more thoroughly enjoyed now than ever before. In the light of its latter day triumph it is interesting to reflect that, when it was first produced in this country in 1877, it barely escaped death during its early weeks from sheer lack of appreciation.

It would have been difficult to have brought into conjunction a better selected company of stars for the revival. Yet the production suffers to a certain extent from that lack of unity which is the common defect of all all-star casts. There are plenty of good voices—it would be hard to imagine a better singing cast—but there is never a moment when one is not conscious that the owners of the voices are intent upon scoring individual "points." No such defect, however, mars the chorus, which is one of the most robust and best trained sing-

ing organizations that has yet appeared in a Broadway revival.

As for the well-remembered characters, most of them are excellently embodied. Miss Marie Cahill is quite delightful as *Little Buttercup*, although with too great deference to the gala features of the revival, she dresses the bumboat woman after the manner of an English matron decked out for a garden party. From every point of view Mr. George J. McFarlane's *Captain Corcoran* is effective. He not only sings his music in a mellow baritone, but lends to the character just that touch of romance which the operetta needs and which it has almost invariably lacked in the past.

One of the pronounced individual comedy successes goes to Mr. De Wolf Hopper as the most cock-eyed *Dick Deadeye* that "Pinafore" tradition has yet afforded. He brings out humorous possibilities in the rôle which have not been so much as suspected in past revivals. Not in years has this popular star succeeded in getting so far away from the incubus of "Casey At The Bat."

As the ceremonious bureaucrat, *Sir Joseph Porter*, Mr. Henry E. Dixey

acts with charm and dances with all the graces of his old "Adonis" days, but he contributes nothing whatever to the production in a musical sense.

The glaring defect in the performance lies in the *Josephine* of Miss Louise Gunning, which is burdened with



Photograph by
Hall, New York

Grace Freeman as
Marjorie Joy

Melville Stewart as
Challoner in "The
Country Girl"

elaborate affectations entirely out of accord with the genuineness of the operetta itself. The music of the rôle offers few

difficulties for her, but she misses the savor of the librettist's jingling lines. The other feminine part of *Hebe* is credit-



Genevieve Finlay as the
Princess and Robert Elliott
as the *Rajah of Bhong* in
"The Country Girl"

Photograph by Hall,
New York

ably sung and acted by Miss Alice Brady. And then there is the good ship's crew of more than one hundred lusty voices, a model chorus in every respect.

Simultaneously with this most ambitious revival of "Pinafore" that has been accomplished since the original vogue of the Gilbert and Sullivan oper-

ettas, came the death by drowning of its venerable and famous librettist, Sir William S. Gilbert, at his country estate in England. With his going passed one of the true minor geniuses of the English-speaking stage in the last century. His career had lengthened to seventy-five years and his life's work had been

honorably accomplished. No other writer has afforded more innocent entertainment for the public and none has employed his talents more legitimately or successfully. Gilbert found *opera-comique* in England an exotic and developed and refined it into an institution. From "Trial By Jury," with which he emerged with Sir Arthur Sullivan in 1876, through a series of remarkable successes which included "The Sorcerer," "Patience," "Iolanthe," "The Pirates of Penzance," "Ruddigore," "The Yeoman Of The Guard" and "The Gondoliers," he progressed to the applause of the entire English-speaking world. No other writer whose mission is to lightly amuse has had a career such as his. His work, which has been happily described as a pure and sparkling spring of innocent merriment, was never marred by the taint of unwholesomeness or by so much as a single suggestive or offensive line. He lashed the follies of his time with the whip of good-natured but scathing satire and he enjoyed a greater influence both political and social than many of his more serious colleagues. Although he will be best and longest remembered for his libretti, he was a dramatist of no mean attainments. He was the author of "Pygmalion and Galatea," "The Palace of Truth," "Broken Hearts" and "The Wicked World." In prose comedies his wit shone in "Engaged," "Dan'l Druce" and "Comedy and Tragedy." His appeal was humorous, but his humor was not of the evanescent kind. Though he became a master of one of the most ephemeral forms of art he did not write in the sand. His imprint upon the English theatre is lasting and his operettas are for future generations no less than they have been for those of the past.

THE perennial freshness of Gilbert and Sullivan's work is all the more apparent when placed in comparison with the new edition of "The Country Girl," the musical-comedy by Mr. Lionel Monckton, Mr. Paul Rubens, Mr. James T. Tanner and Mr. Adrian Ross which only eight years ago held both London and New York in the thrall of

its tuneful melodies and graceful lyrics, and supplied a model for half-a-score or more similar pieces which have followed it with varying success.

Possibly "The Country Girl" is deemed old enough to be new again. At any rate it has just been treated to a rather elaborate revival with Miss Grace Freeman, who sang in it a number of years ago, in the rôle of *Marjorie Joy* which was created by Miss Evie Green. Making due allowance for the difference in the quality of the cast and for the familiarity of its principal airs, it is evident that its mission was fulfilled with the termination of its original run. Though dainty in melodic texture it can now be seen that its music contains no qualities that resist imitation or defeat attempts at improvement. Its saccharine story has become somewhat stale and its rather obvious English humor thwarts the attempt that has been made to bring it up to date.

In a score so prolific in solos and concerted numbers it is not surprising that a few should reassert their old attractiveness, so "Boy and Girl" by Miss Freeman and Mr. Melville Stewart; "Two Little Chicks" by Miss Florence Burdett and Mr. John Slavin—the latter the successor of Mr. William Norris—and "Take Your Pretty Partner" by the inevitable sextette are again heard with evident pleasure by the summer audiences. Mr. Robert Elliott and Miss Genevieve Finlay, as the *Rajah* and the *Princess*, also sing "The Rajah of Bhong" number cleverly.

The story of *Geoffrey Challoner*, who returns after many vicissitudes to Devonshire to claim *Marjorie Joy*, the playmate of his youth, as his own and finds that she has developed into a favorite London actress, will be recalled without difficulty. But plots in these English concoctions of a few years ago are decidedly of something less than secondary importance.

The revival of "The Country Girl" is not merely a time-serving project. Its managers seem to have faith in its vitality and it presently will be seen in various other cities where once it enjoyed hospitality and favor.